Amid coronavirus fears, a second wave of flu hits U.S. kids

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A second wave of flu is hitting the U.S., turning this into one of the nastiest seasons for children in a decade.

The number of child deaths and the hospitalization rate for youngsters are the highest seen at this point in any season since the severe flu outbreak of 2009-10, health officials said Friday. And the wave is expected to keep going for weeks.

Experts say it is potentially a bad time for an extended flu season, given concerns about the new coronavirus out of China, which can cause symptoms that can be difficult to distinguish from flu without testing.

If coronavirus were to begin spreading in the U.S., there could be confusion about whether people are getting sick with it or the flu, said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious-diseases expert at Vanderbilt University.



In this Jan. 3, 2019, file photo, Wendy Kerley gives Ethan Getman, 15, a shot of the flu vaccine at the Cordova Shot Nurse clinic in Memphis, Tenn.

Associated Press

Continued on Page 3

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U.S. won't charge ex-FBI official McCabe, a Trump target

By ERIC TUCKER and MI-CHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal prosecutors have declined to charge former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, closing an investigation into whether the longtime target of President Donald Trump's ire had lied to federal officials about his involvement in a news media disclosure, McCabe's legal team said Friday.

The decision, coming at the end of a tumultuous week between the Justice Department and the White House, is likely to further agitate a president who has loudly complained that federal prosecutors have pursued cases against his allies but not against his perceived political enemies.

The action resolves a criminal investigation that began nearly two years ago with a referral from the Justice Department's inspector general's office, which concluded that McCabe had repeatedly lied about having authorized a subordinate to share information with a newspaper reporter for a 2016 article about an FBI investigation into the Clinton Foundation.

The case was handled by the U.S. attorney's office in Washington, which was at the center of a public dispute with Justice Department leadership this week over the recommended sentence for Trump ally and confidant Roger Stone. Senior Justice Department officials overruled a decision on a recommended prison sentence that they felt was too harsh, but Attorney General William Barr also took a rare public swipe at Trump by saying in a television interview that the president's tweets about the Stone case and other



In this June 7, 2017, file photo, then FBI Acting Director Andrew McCabe listens during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

matters were making his job "impossible."

On Friday, lawyers from that office notified McCabe's attorneys in a phone call and a letter that they were closing the case. The letter — signed by the chief of the office's public corruption unit — did not give a precise reason, but said the decision was reached after "careful consideration" and "based on the totality of the circumstances and all of the information known to the government at this time."

McCabe's lawyers, Michael Bromwich and David Schertler, said they were gratified by the decision.

"At long last, justice has been done in this matter," the lawyers said in a statement. "We said at the outset of the criminal investigation, almost two years ago, that if the facts and the law determined the result, no charges would be brought."

McCabe, a frequent target of Trump's attacks, has denied that he intentionally misled anyone. He has said his 2018 firing — for what the Justice Department called "lack of candor" — was politically motivated. He sued the Justice Department in August, saying officials had used the inspector general's conclusions as a pretext to rid the FBI of leaders Trump perceived as biased against him.

The decision is likely to further exacerbate tensions between and Trump and Barr, who before speaking out in the television interview had privately complained to aides and the president himself that Trump's comments about the Justice Department were undercutting his political agenda and raising questions about the department's credibility.

The moment came against a backdrop of growing anger from Trump at the Justice Department. The president has seethed that more of his political enemies have not been charged, namely former FBI Director James Comey

and his associates.

He has tweeted scores of times that Comey should be charged with crimes and was particularly incensed that no charges were filed over the former FBI director's handling of memos about his interactions with Trump, according to a White House official and Republican close to the White House who were not authorized to speak publicly about private discussions and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The president angrily denounced the decision and berated Barr over it, according to the officials. Aides expected the decision not to charge Mc-Cabe could produce a similar eruption of rage. The White House had no immediate comment on Friday. Trump has also repeatedly complained about FBI Director Christopher Wray in recent months, saying he has not done enough to rid the bureau of people who are disloyal to Trump.

The decision to spare Mc-

Cabe criminal charges eliminates the prospect of a sensational trial that would have refocused public attention on the chaotic months of 2016, when the FBI was entangled in presidential politics through investigations touching both main contenders — Democrat Hillary Clinton and Trump, her Republican opponent.

The investigation by the U.S. attorney's office in Washington arose from an October 2016 story in The Wall Street Journal that described internal debates roiling the FBI and the Justice Department weeks before the presidential election about how aggressively the Clinton Foundation should be investigated. The article recounted a particularly tense phone call between McCabe and a senior Justice Department official.

The inspector general's report said McCabe repeatedly told internal investigators that he had not authorized anyone at the FBI to speak with the reporter and that he did not know who did.

The report said McCabe ultimately corrected that account and confirmed that he had encouraged the conversation with the reporter to counter a narrative that he thought was false.

McCabe has denied any wrongdoing and has said he was distracted by the tumult surrounding the FBI and the White House during the times he was questioned. One of the interviews took place the same day that Comey was fired. "During these inquiries, I answered questions truthfully and as accurately as I could amidst the chaos that surrounded me," McCabe has said in a statement.



Amid coronavirus fears, a second wave of flu hits U.S. kids

Continued from Front

This flu season got off to its earliest start in 15 years, with surges of flu-like illnesses seen in parts of the South as early as October. Most cases were caused by a type of flu that usually causes substantial infections only in the spring, at the tail end of the flu season.

That wave peaked in late December and dropped steadily for weeks afterward.

But a second surge began in late January. Last week saw another rise in the percentage of doctor's office visits that were due to flu-like illness, according to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We have not yet peaked for influenza. We are still on our way up," Dr. David Weber, a University of North Carolina infectious-diseases specialist, said of the patient traffic in Chapel Hill.

Overall, the CDC estimated that 26 million Americans have gotten sick with flu this past fall and winter, with about 250,000 flu-related hospitalizations and around 14,000 deaths.

The viruses behind both waves can be hard on children and young adults. But they aren't considered as dangerous to retirementage people -- good news, since most flu deaths and hospitalizations each winter occur in the elderly.

In fact, the overall death

and hospitalization rates this season are not high "because we haven't seen the elderly as involved in this flu season," said the CDC's Lynnette Brammer. But 92 flu-related deaths have already been reported in children, a higher total at this point of the year than in any season in the past decade. And the hospitalization rates also are far higher than what's been

The CDC said the reason is that two strains of the flu that are tough on children are spreading in the same season.

seen at this point.

The health agency is expected to release an estimate next week of how effective the flu vaccine has been.

So far, only 15 U.S. cases of the coronavirus have been confirmed, and no deaths. All but two of the cases were in people who had traveled to Wuhan, China, the epicenter of the international outbreak. The remaining two were spread from travelers to their spouses.

Schaffner said that for the time being, it is easy to determine a likely coronavirus case by asking about a patient's travel history.

It's possible that concern about the coronavirus has led some people with flu symptoms to go to the doctor for testing this year, whereas they might have just stayed home in other years, Brammer said.



In this Jan. 23, 2020, photo, a syringe with influenza vaccine inside heads for its mark during a flu vaccination at Eastfield College in Mesquite, Texas.

Associated Press





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President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno in the Oval Office of the White House, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 2020, in Washington.

Associated Press



Trump still hoping for U.S.-Russia-China nuclear arms pact

By DEB RIECHMANN **Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House has not made a decision about whether to extend the only treaty that constrains U.S. and Russian nuclear forces because administration officials want more time to coax China into a threeway arms control pact.

China, which is poised to at least double the size of its nuclear stockpile in the next decade, has not publicly expressed any interest in such talks. A senior administration official, who briefed reporters at the White House on Friday, said Beijing's continued silence only raises questions about its intentions and will force America to strengthen its deterrence and military readiness.

The administration official, who spoke only on condition of anonymity according to White House ground rules, said the U.S. and Russia support the idea of engaging China to avert a costly nuclear arms race. American allies, however, also are concerned that the Trump administration will not take Moscow up on its offer to extend the New START treaty for up to five years. The treaty, which governs the number of U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons, expires in February 2021.

"So far — and this is not surprising — the Chinese are not interested in arms control," national security adviser Robert O'Brien said earlier this week at the Atlantic Council. "They've got the money, and they're

moving ahead very quickly on every type of advanced platform and weapons system known to man, whether it's space-based, cyberbased, all different types of kinetic systems."

"I think we're hopeful that if we can move forward with the Russians ... that there will be pressure on the Chinese, or there will be a desire on the Chinese part not to ... incur the expense of an arms race."

It's unclear how much time the Trump administration is willing to wait on the Chinese to engage in an arms control discussion. As the treaty's expiration date nears, the U.S. might agree to extend New START to provide more time to get China into a three-way agreement, the administration official said.

Esper defends shifting defense funds for Trump's border wall



U.S. Secretary for Defense Mark Esper speaks during a press conference on the first day of the Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany, Friday, Feb. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

By ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer MUNICH, Germany (AP) U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper on Friday defended his decision to divert billions of dollars in Force aircraft and other military programs to help pay for President Donald Trump's promised wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

Esper was asked by a reporter about criticism from Democrats and Republi-

cans in Congress, including Rep. Mac Thornberry, a Republican from Texas, who called the diversion of funds contrary to the constitutional authority of Congress.

funding for Navy and Air "Border security is national security," Esper said, "and national security is our mission."

> we took is legal under the law, and so it should be no surprise, and I'll just leave it at that for now."

Esper spoke on the sidelines of an international security conference in Munich.

The Pentagon announced on Thursday that Esper approved shifting \$3.8 billion in funds that Congress had previously authorized for F-35 fighter aircraft and other military programs. The money is being diverted to help the Department of Homeland Security build portions of the border wall. The Pentagon indicated that more such actions could be coming to provide additional funding for Trump's signature campaign promise. The action drew sharp re-

bukes from Democrats as well as Republicans.

"Today's reprogramming request confirms once again that the President is obsessed with fulfilling a campaign promise at the expense of our national security," Rep. Adam He added, "The action Smith of Washington, the Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a statement.



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Michael Avenatti is convicted of trying to extort Nike

By LARRY NEUMEISTER **Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Avenatti, the combative lawyer who gained fame by representing porn star Stormy Daniels in lawsuits involving President Donald Trump, was convicted Friday of trying to extort sportswear giant Nike.

The verdict was returned by a federal jury in Manhattan following a three-week trial in which prosecutors said Avenatti threatened to use his media access to hurt Nike's reputation and stock price unless the company paid him up to \$25 million. The convictions for at-

tempted extortion and honest services fraud carry a combined potential penalty of 42 years in prison.

Avenatti glared at the jurors as the verdict was being announced but said nothing.

Afterward, he shook hands with his lawyers and told them "great job" before he was led back to the cell where he has been held since a judge found he had violated his bail conditions. His lawyer, Scott Srebnick, said he would appeal the conviction but otherwise declined to comment. A judge set sentencing for June.

The jury agreed with prosecutors who argued that Avenatti misused a client's information "in an effort to extort tens of millions of dollars" from Nike, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said in a written statement. "While the defendant may representing Daniels and legal terms and a suit and tie, the jury clearly saw the defendant's scheme for what it was — an old fashioned shakedown," he said. At trial, lawyers for Nike used words like "shakedown" and "stickup" to describe what they felt they



In this July 23, 2019, file photo, California attorney Michael Avenatti walks from a courthouse in New York, after facing charges.

Associated Press

were subject to when Avenatti threatened to stage a news conference to muddy Nike's name by linking the company to a college basketball scandal.

Avenatti, 48, became a cable news fixture in 2018 and 2019 as journalists courted him for information about Daniels and her claims of a tryst with Trump before he became president, and a payoff to remain silent about it. At his peak of notoriety, Avenatti used Twitter and TV appearances to relentlessly criticize Trump and even considered running for president himself.

Many of his appearances occurred while he was personal lawyer, Michael Cohen. Cohen is serving a three-year prison sentence after pleading guilty to lying to Congress and campaign finance violations in connection with hush payments to Daniels and an-

an affair with Trump.

After Avenatti's conviction, Donald Trump Jr. said in a tweet: "I look forward to Michael's witty twitter retorts to the jury that just found him guilty in all counts. Though I'm told he is still doing well amongst the Democrat primary contenders." The president's son also sent a tweet with snippets of some of Avanatti's television appearances and suggested the media loved Avenatti.

Avenatti's fall was swift. He was arrested as he was about to meet Nike lawyers last March to press his demands for millions of dollars to conduct an internal probe of the Beaverton, have tried to hide behind after the arrest of Trump's Oregon-based apparel maker. Evidence at trial showed Avenatti owed at least \$11 million at the time and had been evicted from his law offices for failure to pay rent that totaled roughly \$50,000 a month.

Avenatti maintained he other woman who claimed was taking the aggres-

sive position at the urging of his client Gary Franklin,

who ran a youth basketball league in Los Angeles and was angry that Nike ended a decade-long sponsorship that provided \$72,000 annually and free gear. He sought \$1.5 million for Franklin, as well.

Franklin testified that two Nike executives forced him to pay money to the mother of an elite high school basketball player and to pass along payments to the handlers of other players while doctoring paperwork to hide the purpose of the funds.

Franklin said he felt betrayed by Avenatti after he learned the lawyer was demanding millions of dollars for himself and another lawyer. He also said he would not have approved of Avenatti threatening to smear Nike's name, since he wanted to repair his relationship with the company. 🔲

In retort to abortion ban, lawmaker calls for vasectomies

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) An Alabama lawmaker fed up with her colleagues' attempts to outlaw abortion has filed legislation to require all men over 50 to

get vasectomies.

Democratic Rep. Rolanda Hollis said Friday that she introduced the bill to send "the message that men should not be legislating what women do with their bodies."

Alabama lawmakers last year approved a ban on abortion unless the woman's life was in danger. A federal judge blocked the law from taking effect while a legal challenge plays out in court.

"Year after year the majority party continues to introduce new legislation that tries to dictate a woman's body and her reproductive rights. We should view this as the same outrageous overstep in authority," the Birmingham lawmaker wrote in a statement texted to The Associated Press. Hollis said that doctors, and not legislators, are the ones to be consulted over surgery, medications and making the "incredibly difficult decisions" related to personal reproductive rights. Alabama was one of several states that last year attempted to enact new abortion restrictions in the hopes of getting the U.S. Supreme Court to revisit the 1973 decision that legalized abortion nationwide.



U.S. brings new charges against Chinese tech giant Huawei

By ERIC TUCKER **Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. Justice Department has added new criminal charges against Chinese tech giant Huawei and several subsidiaries, accusing the company of a brazen scheme to steal trade secrets from competitors in America, federal prosecutors announced Thursday. The new indictment also alleges the company provided surveillance equipment to Iran that enabled the monitoring of protesters during 2009 anti-government demonstrations in Tehran, and that it sought to conceal business that it was doing in North Korea despite economic sanctions there.

The company disputed the allegations in a statement and called them them "without merit." China's foreign ministry accused the U.S. government of "economic ebullying" and improperly using security allegations to "oppress Chinese companies."

The new allegations come as the Trump administration raises national security concerns about Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment manufacturer, and aggressively lobbies Western allies to bar the company from wireless, high-speed networks.

The superseding indictment, brought by federal prosecutors in Brooklyn, adds to the company's legal woes in the U.S. It adds charges of racketeering conspiracy and conspiracy to steal trade secrets to an existing criminal case in New York, where the company already faces charges of lying to banks about deals that violated economic sanctions against

attle have brought a separate trade secrets theft case against the company. Meng Wanzhou, a senior Huawei executive and the daughter of the company's founder, is accused of making false representations to banks about Huawei's relationship with its Iran-based affiliate. She was arrested

lumbia, and has yet to be extradited to the U.S.

in Vancouver, British Co- The indictment details efforts to steal from a half

conceal its business dealdozen companies. ings with Iran and North Ko-

In this Jan. 8, 2020, file photo, national security adviser Robert O'Brien, listens as President Donald Trump addresses the nation from the White House in Washington.

Associated Press

The latest indictment, an update of a case first filed last year, accuses Huawei of plotting to steal the trade secrets and intellectual property of rival companies in the U.S.

In some instances, prosecutors said, Huawei recruited employees of competitors to steal intellectual property. The company also provided incentives to its own employees by offering bonuses to those who brought in the most valuable stolen information, and it used proxies, including professors at research institutions, Federal prosecutors in Se- in the pursuit of inside information, prosecutors said.

The stolen information included antenna and robot testing technology as well as user manuals for internet routers. One goal of the theft, the Justice Department said, was to allow Huawei to save on research and development costs.

In one May 2013 episode, according to the indictment, a Huawei engineer removed a robot arm from the laboratory of a rival company based in Washington state, stashing the item in a laptop bag. The engineer emailed photographs and measurements of the arm to others at Huawei before the arm was returned to the company, which had discovered the

At a 2004 trade show in Chicago, a Huawei employee was found in the middle of the night in the booth of a technology company, "removing the cover from a networking device and taking photographs of the circuitry inside," prosecutors said.

The employee wore a badge that listed his employer as "Weihua," or Huawei spelled with its syllables reversed.

The indictment also lays out

rea, including by referring to both countries in internal documents by their code names.

steps that the company to

In a statement, Huawei called the new indictment "part of the Justice Department's attempt to irrevocably damage Huawei's reputation and its business for reasons related to competition rather than law enforcement."

"These new charges are without merit and are based largely on recycled civil disputes from last 20 years that have been previously settled, litigated and in some cases, rejected by federal judges and juries," it said. "The government will not prevail on its charges, which we will prove to be both unfounded and un-

Huawei's global cybersecurity officer, John Suffolk, said there's "no evidence" to support the U.S. allega"We believe they're deliberately misleading and hoping if they throw enough mud then some of that mud would stick," he said in a media conference call. Asked about the charges, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman called on Washington to "stop op-

pressing Chinese business-

"The United States has misused its national power to oppress Chinese companies with no proof of any wrongdoing," said the spokesman, Geng Shuang. He spoke in a regular news briefing that was conducted over social media as part of government efforts to contain a virus outbreak by avoiding public gatherings.

"Such practice is disgraceful and immoral, and it is beneath the status of the United States as a major country," Geng said. "Such economic bullying practice is a blatant denial of the market principle, for which the U.S. has been a self-proclaimed champion."

Trump administration officials, including Cabinet secretaries, have recently leveled national security allegations against Huawei in an effort to encourage European nations to ban the gear from next-generation cellular networks.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper are making the pitch to Western allies during a trip to Munich this week.

Attorney General William Barr, in a speech last week, lamented what he said was China's aspiration for economic dominance and proposed that the U.S. invest in Western competitors of Huawei.

The administration's national security adviser, Robert O'Brien, asserted this week that Huawei can secretly tap into communications through the networking equipment it sells globally. The company disputes that, saying it "has never and will never covertly access telecom networks, nor do we have the capability to do so."







In this Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2012, file photo, Ben Physick, of Australia, watches the life of Muhammad Ali in video clips on display at the Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville, Ky.

Associated Press

Sites in Tennessee, Kentucky, added to Civil Rights Trail

BY ADRIAN SAINZ

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Two sites in Kentucky and two in Tennessee have been added to the U.S. Civil Rights Trail, officials said Thursday. The Muhammad Ali Center in Louisville and the SEEK rights movement of the Museum in Russellville are the two new sites in Kentucky. In Memphis, Tennessee, the Beale Street Historic District and the WDIA radio station were also added to the trail, which was launched in 2018 to promote civil rights tourism. The sites were announced at B.B. King's restaurant on Beale Street on Thursday.

"Today is a special day as Tennessee shines a brighter equal rights," Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said in a statement. "I am proud that with the addition of these two sites, travelers from around the world will have the opportunity to learn more about Memphis' deep civil rights history." The Civil workers.

Rights Trail includes about 120 churches, courthouses, schools, museums and other landmarks primarily between Topeka, Kansas, and Washington, D.C., that were important to the civil 1950s and 1960s, officials said. The four new locations are being added during Black History Month, officials noted. Established in 1841 in Memphis, Beale Street featured blackowned businesses and became a place where African Americans could work and enjoy themselves during segregation. It remains a popular tourist attraction today. The street, located light on the brave men and in Memphis' downtown, women who stood up for was the site of a march led by The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. that turned violent in March 1968. The civil rights leader was killed in Memphis on April 4, 1968, when he returned to lead a second march in support of striking sanitation

Evidence in trash can links dead neighbor to missing S.C. girl

By JEFFREY COLLINS **Associated Press**

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Investigators found a man dead inside his South Carolina home shortly after finding an item from a missing 6-year-old airl who lived in his neighborhood inside his trash can, authorities said.

Three days after Faye Marie Swetlik's mother frantically called 911 to report her daughter's disappearance from their front yard in Cayce, the girl's body was found Thursday. Her death is being investigated as a homicide, although details about how she died have not been released.

The girl's body was found in the woods, and police think it was put there after investigators found the evidence inside the trash can, Cayce Public Safety Sgt. Evan Antley said at a Friday news conference. Antley didn't directly link the death of 30-year-old Coty Scott Taylor, whose body was found at his home, to the girl's killing. But Antley said the item found in Taylor's trash Thursday was something listed on the missing person flyer created after she disappeared. He did not specify exactly what it was.

"Our evidence and our investigation does link these two together, I can confirm he was a neighbor. He was not a relative. He was not a friend. He was merely a neighbor," Antley said.

Both bodies were found Thursday after the item was found by investigators who followed around a trash truck and sifted through the garbage as it made a special trip in the neighborhood, Antley said.

After finding the item, investigators were quickly organizing a methodical search of nearby woods that had been searched before when Cayce Public Safety Director Byron Snellgrove found Faye's body, Antley said. Less than three hours later, Snellgrove's voice trembled as he publicly announced her death.

Investigators found Taylor's body inside his home shortly after they found the girl's body, Antley said. He refused to characterize how Taylor might have died.

Autopsies on both Taylor and the girl are scheduled for Saturday and their causes



This undated photo provided by the Cayce Department of Public Safety shows Faye Marie Swetlik, who has been missing since shortly after getting off her school bus near her South Carolina home Monday, Feb. 10, 2020.

Associated Press

of death will not be released until the coroner can review the results.

In a 911 call released Friday, Faye's mother said her daughter was in the front yard after getting off the school bus and then just suddenly disappeared. She said she searched for her before calling police.

"I checked all the houses in my neighborhood and anybody that actually answered is out looking for her too," the girl's mother said after carefully describing what her daughter was wearing through tears in the 911 call.

More than 250 officers searched for the girl over three days. They knocked on every door in the neighborhood and Taylor spoke to police in his home before the evidence was discovered, Antley said.

Investigators sealed off the entrance to the neighborhood for a while, questioning everyone going in and out, said Antley, who thanked them for their patience.

"We went in there and turned their lives upside down. We made them late for work, we searched their homes and we invaded their privacy," Antley said. "But we did it for a reason and we had a goal."



Virus cases rise as experts question China's numbers

By KEN MORITSUGU **Associated Press**

BEIJING (AP) — Infections and deaths from the new virus in China ballooned for a second straight day Friday, on paper at least, as officials near the epicenter of the outbreak struggled to keep up with a backlog of patients' lab work.

The acceleration in cases was not necessarily an indicator of a surge in the illness known as COVID-19 because the hardest-hit province of Hubei and its capital of Wuhan changed the way it counted cases. But public health experts wrestled with what exactly could be deduced from the numbers given the shift in approach.

"If you change the way you count cases, that obviously confounds our capacity to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the quarantine," said Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease expert at Vanderbilt University in the United States. "We have to interpret the numbers with great caution."

Confirmed cases of the virus rose to 63,851 in mainland China, an increase of 5,090 from a day earlier, according to the National Health Commission. The death toll stood at 1,380, up 121. Still, the World Health Organization continued to report lower numbers, standing by



In this Feb. 13, 2020 photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, nurses in protective suits treat a patient in the intensive care unit at Ditan Hospital in Beijing, one of the hospitals in China's capital that are receiving COVID-19 patients.

Associated Press

the way cases were counted before Hubei's shift. WHO pressed for more details Friday on the change in tabulating cases. Doctors in Hubei are now making diagnoses based on symptoms, patient history and chest X-rays instead of waiting for laboratory confirmation.

"We're seeking further clarity on how clinical diagnoses are being made to ensure other respiratory illnesses including influenza are not getting mixed into the COVID-19 data," said WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Meantime, the vulnerability of health workers responding to the epidemic was crystalized with other data emerging from China. More than 1,700 medical workers in China have contracted COVID-19 and six have died, according to the health commission, which said it was "highly concerned" by the infections. WHO echoed that, with Tedros saying more information was needed on when the workers were infected and under what circumstances. Transmissions

to front-line health workers can signal problems in infection control policies and signal that a disease is becoming more easily transmissible.

Schaffner said he was optimistic that China's unprecedented augrantines — putting 60 million people in its hardest-hit cities under lockdown — would help reduce transmissions. But without consistent numbers, he said, it was hard to draw any such conclusion. "China and the world community would like to restore a sense of normalcy but in order to do that we need to have confidence in what is going on and we're not there yet," Schaffner said.

China has come under intense criticism within the country for its response to the crisis and has been the target of complaints from elsewhere too. But WHO's chief of emergencies, Dr. Michael Ryan, defended China's handling of the outbreak and its cooperation with others.

"From our perspective, we have a government that's cooperating with us, that's inviting in international experts, that's shared sequences with the world, that continues to engage with the outside community," he said.

The vast majority of cases are in China but reverberations from the outbreak were felt around the world, with hundreds of infections reported elsewhere.

More than 580 cases have been confirmed outside mainland China, including the first infection on the African continent, reported Friday in Egypt. Experts and African leaders have expressed concern that should the virus spread there, it might wreak havoc among less developed countries with fewer health resources.

There have been three fatalities, in the Philippines, Hong Kong and Japan.

Jewish leaders seek better policing of online hate speech

By DAVID RISING **Associated Press**

MUNICH (AP) — Jewish leaders called Friday for better policing of hate speech on social media platforms over concerns prompted by recent attacks that people on the margins of society are being incited online to violence.

Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, president of the Conference of European Rabbis and chief rabbi of Moscow, said online radicalization was giving rise not only to more anti-Semitic incidents, but also hate crimes directed at



German police officers stand in front of the Bayerischer Hot hotel on the first day of the Munich Security Conference in Munich, Germany, Friday, Feb. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

Muslims and others.

given by social media to

society is causing chaos," he said, citing attacks in New Zealand, Germany and the United States.

were quite a few attacks against houses of worship mosques, synagogues and churches."

The event, sponsored by tion and the World Jewish limit speech," he said.

"The strength and power people on the margins of Goldschmidt said that financial crimes. \Box

with legal protections for free speech, it was hard for governments to police hate speech effectively, "Last year, 2019, there but that private companies had more flexibility.

"A private company that gives a platform, whether it's a theater or a Facebook page, definitely has Goldschmidt's organiza- the ability and the right to

Congress, came on the Michel Friedman, a promisidelines of the Munich Se- nent German Jewish leadcurity Conference, which er, said, however, that was being attended by governments could do Facebook founder Mark more if they made the is-Zuckerberg, though he sue a priority, saying that was not present for the dis- authorities have been effectively combating online



E.U. officials push for bloc to enforce Libya arms embargo

By FRANK JORDANS **Associated Press**

BERLIN (AP) — European Union officials are seeking support from member states to have naval ships enforce the U.N. arms embargo against Libya, according to a confidential memo obtained Friday by The Associated Press.

The proposal from the EU's diplomatic service, dated Feb. 12, suggests the bloc's largely dormant anti-migrant smuggling mission Operation Sophia should be renamed "Operation EU Active Surveillance."

The memo, circulated ahead of a meeting Monday of EU foreign ministers on Libya, urges member states to garee on whether gathering information on, and upholding, the U.N. embargo should become the naval mission's "core task." Monitoring people smuggling would be relegated to a "supporting task" carried out from the

World powers agreed at a conference in Berlin last month to respect the arms embargo against Libya, but in practice weapons have continued to flow to the two warring factions.

German frigate.

block the deployment of

further ships last year. It cur-

rently functions almost ex-

clusively using aircraft and

One European diplomat

said there was agreement

among the bloc's 27 mem-

bers to strengthen U.N.

monitoring of the embar-

go, but not on the issue of

The diplomat, who was not

authorized to speak public-

ly, said Austria has object-

ed to putting naval ships

back into the Mediterra-

nean, an issue that would

likely come up at the an-

nual Munich Security Con-

ference over the weekend.

In an apparent conces-

sion to governments con-

cerned about the naval

ships picking up migrants,

the EU memo proposes

that "naval assets can be

deployed in the areas most

relevant to the implemen-

tation of the arms embar-

dispatching naval assets.

pilotless drones.

The European External Action Service, the bloc's diplomatic arm, warned in the memo that "we run the risk that, short of concrete action, the EU will become irrelevant and others will continue to determine the development of events in Libya in ways that will not respond to our interests."

"In fact, blatant violations of the arms embargo continue and have even increased in the last weeks," it added.

"In order to protect its interests, the EU has to act in a credible manner that produces changes on the ground and conveys a clear message of determination," EU diplomats suggested.

The proposal goes beyond the agreement by EU countries last month to refocus the mission on the arms embargo by stressing the need to "deploy naval assets in the relevant zone of its Area of Operations."



This June 24, 2018 file photo, released by the Libyan Coast Guard, shows migrants on a ship intercepted offshore near the town of Gohneima, east of the capital, Tripoli, Libya.

Associated Press

The EU naval mission Oper-This would be "in the eastation Sophia was launched ern part of the area of opin 2015 amid a wave of ireration or at least 100km regular migration from off the Libyan coast, where North Africa to Europe. It chances to conduct reswas named after a baby cue operations are lower. Rules of engagement will girl born to a rescued Somali woman aboard a have to be designed in a conflict sensitive manner," it suggested.

Since the 2011 ouster and subsequent death of dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Libya has sunk further into chaos and turmoil. It is currently divided between a U.N.-supported government, based in the capital, Tripoli, headed by Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj and supported by an array of militias, and an administration based in the country's east, supported by Gen. Khalifa Hifter.

Hifter and his self- styled Libyan Arab Armed Forces have been waging an offensive to capture Tripoli since last April. On Thursday, Hifter's forces indiscriminately shelled residential neighborhoods around Tripoli, killing one woman and wounding at least four

Brig. Gen. Khaled al-Mahjoub, head of mobilization for Hifter's forces, hailed the proposal as "an important step that would stop the influx of mercenaries and arms from Turkey to the criminal gangs of Tripoli." He renewed calls for the arms embargo to be lifted on Hifter's troops so they can carry on their offensive against "terrorist groups" allied with the Tripoli govern-

The Tripoli-based government did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

But tension over how to distribute migrants picked up in the Mediterranean among EU member states, and claims that the naval presence might encour-BUCUTI & TARA age smugglers, led Italy to

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U.S. and Taliban agree to truce, way forward in Afghanistan

By MATTHEW LEE and KATHY **GANNON**

Associated Press

MUNICH (AP) - The United States and the Taliban have agreed to a temporary truce that, if successful, would open the way for a deal that would bring American troops home from Afghanistan and end 18 years of war.

The peace deal would call for negotiations between Afghans on both sides of the conflict to start next month, an eventual countrywide cease-fire and a commitment from the Taliban not to harbor terrorist groups like al Qaida, while setting a timetable for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The truce marks a milestone in efforts to end America's longest-running conflict and fulfill President Donald Trump's campaign pledge to bring U.S. troops home from foreign conflicts. But prospects for a real and lasting peace remain unclear.

Details were provided separately Friday by a senior U.S. official and a Taliban official, who were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter and spoke on the condition of anonym-

The U.S. official said the attacks. If the Taliban up-



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, left, shakes hands with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, during the 56th Munich Security Conference (MSC) in Munich, southern Germany, on Friday, Feb. 14,

agreement for a sevenday "reduction in violence" is "very specific" and covers the entire country, including Afghan government The Taliban official said the forces. There were indications a formal announcement could come as early as the weekend.

The official said the Taliban had committed to a halt in roadside and suicide bombings as well as rocket

hold their commitments, a U.S.-Taliban peace agreement would be signed within 10 days.

signing had been tentatively set for Feb. 29, with the start of the Afghan talks planned for March 10. The official said Germany and Norway have offered to host the talks but there has been no decision on the

Associated Press

That Taliban official said the agreement would provide for the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners before the start of the negotiations.

Much will depend on the results of the all-Afghan negotiations, if and when they get off the ground. The presence of "spoilers" — those happy with the status quo — will remain a threat to peace efforts throughout the process, the U.S. senior official acknowledged.

Also uncertain are the gains made for Afghan women and girls since the fall of the Taliban months after the U.S. military response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks ordered by Osama bin Laden from Afghan soil. But, for the Taliban, the proposal represents a way to gain the political legitimacy they never had in the late 1990s when they first came to power.

The new developments came as U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Mark Esper met Friday with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the sidelines of an international security forum in Mu-

To make good on its promise to release Taliban prisoners, Washington is going to need the cooperation of Ghani, who has been

critical of the way U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has conducted the talks with the Taliban, complaining about being kept in the

Ghani has also bickered with his partner in the current Unity Government, Abdullah Abdullah, over who will represent Kabul at the negotiating table. Ghani has insisted he lead the talks, while his political opponents and other prominent Afghans have called for more inclusive representation at the negotiating table.

The Taliban and those familiar with the details of the Afghan negotiations say the representatives from Kabul will include government officials but they will sit across from the Taliban as ordinary Afghans and not as government representatives.

U.S. officials have not publicly spelled out their timetable for an initial drawdown of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, but the expectation is that a reduction from the current total of about 12,000 to approximately 8,600 will begin after the signing of a U.S.-Taliban deal.

That initial reduction is likely to stretch out over a period of weeks or months.

The Taliban official said the withdrawal of foreign troops would start gradually and be carried out over 18 months.

A senior U.S. military officer told a small group of reporters that U.S. counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan against the Islamic State group and al-Qaida will continue, separate from the truce agreement. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive aspects of military operations ahead of an expected announcement of the U.S.-Taliban deal.

He also said the United States has sufficient intelligence-gathering assets to be able to determine within the seven-day period whether the Taliban is making a good-faith effort to reduce violence, even if some limited violence persists. \square

Saudi foreign minister: No meeting planned with Netanyahu

By AYA BATRAWY **Associated Press** DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said no meeting is planned between the kingdom's crown prince and Israel's prime minister, a statement apparently meant to quash reports circulating in Israeli media this week of an alleged summit between the two.

"There is no meeting planned between Saudi Arabia and Israel. Saudi Arabia's policy has been very clear since the beginning of this conflict," Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud told the Saudi-owned Al Arabiya English news website in a



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks to his supporters during his election campaign speech in Rosh Haain, Israel, Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020. Hebrew on board reads "Gantz".

Associated Press

report on Thursday.

"There are no relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel and the kingdom stands firmly behind Palestine," the minister said, adding that it's not unique to have shared interests with Israel in countering Iran since there are many other countries with a similar policy.

Still, the statement was an unusual rebuttal by the kingdom's most senior diplomat to reports circulating in Israeli media, which had reported that a meeting was being planned between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The two countries do not have formal diplomatic relations, despite quietly strengthening ties in past years.



U.S. travel ban for Sri Lanka army chief in hospital shelling

By BHARATHA MALLA-**WARACHI Associated Press**

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)

— The U.S. government on Friday issued a travel ban Sri Lanka's army chief, saying there is "credible information of his involvement" in human rights violations during the final phase of the island nation's civil war that ended 11 years ago, Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo said.

The army chief, Shavendra Silva, and his immediate family members are now prohibited from traveling to the U.S. in a ban that was quickly denounced by Sri Lanka's government, which said "there were no substantiated or proven allegations of human rights violations" committed by Silva. Silva in 2009 was in charge of the 58th Division which encircled the final stronghold of the Tamil Tiger rebels in the last stages of the civil war that killed at least 100,000 people. Human rights groups have accused the division of violating international human rights laws, including using artillery to shell a hospital, an allegation he has de-

Pompeo said in a state- from the Tamil Tigers. The in-



This April 24, 2009, file photo shows Sri Lanka's Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva at a military facility in Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka.

Associated Press

ment that "the allegations of gross human rights violations against Shavendra Silva, documented by the United Nations and other organizations, are serious and credible."

According to a 2015 investigation by the U.N. office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, near the end of the war Silv a was tasked with capturing the country's Putumattalan area

vestigation cited evidence that the hospital and a U.N. facility were shelled.

"Witnesses alleged the use of cluster-type munitions by the Sri Lankan armed forces in their attacks on Putumattalan hospital and the United Nations hub," the investigation's report said.

After the civil war, Silva was promoted to major general. He was promoted again and became Sri Lanka's army commander last year amid international condemnation but is widely respected among Sri Lanka's ethnic Sinhalese majority.

Pompeo urged Sri Lanka's government "to promote human rights, hold accountable individuals responsible for war crimes and human rights violations, advance security sector reform, and uphold its other commitments to pursue justice and reconciliation."

Sri Lanka's foreign ministry said in a statement that Silva was appointed army commander because of his seniority and asked U.S. officials to verify the sources of the information used to justify the travel ban.

The statement added that "it is disappointing that a foreign government should question the prerogative of the democratically elected President to call upon persons with proven expertise to hold key positions on national security related matters."

Sri Lanka declared victory over the rebels in May 2009, ending the Tamil Tigers' 26year campaign for an independent state for minority ethnic Tamils.

Both the Sri Lankan military and the rebels have been accused of wartime abus-

The United Nations has said some 45,000 ethnic Tamil civilians may have been killed during the final months of the conflict.

Sri Lanka's government promised the U.N. Human Rights Council in 2015 that it would investigate the allegations against Silva and involve foreign prosecutors and judges, but has not

E.U., others work on refugee job development in Latin America

By ASTRID GALVAN **Associated Press**

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The European Union says it is donating 4 million euros (\$4.3 million) to help refugees in Mexico, Costa Rica and Honduras find livingwage jobs and better integrate into society.

The announcement in Mexico City on Thursday came as the number of asylum seekers in Mexico in particular has skyrocketed. Just over 70,300 people sought asylum in Mexico last year, and this year is already outpacing last. Nearly 6,000 people applied for asylum in January, a 50% increase over the same time last year.

Several organizations will be involved in carrying out

the three-year initiative, which aims to create more job opportunities and protections for asylum seekers. In Mexico, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has been working with government officials to place people in central and northern Mexico cities, where there are more jobs. Migrants who have been granted asylum and therefore can legally work contributed 40.6 million pesos (\$2.1 million) to the Mexican economy last year, according to the EU. Extreme violence, poverty, political conflict and food and medicine scarcity have driven tens of thousands of people to leave their home countries in Latin America and elsewhere

around the world.

In Costa Rica, a nation of about 5 million people, nearly 60,000 migrants sought asylum last year. Most are Nicaraguans who are highly educated and in professional fields. Hundreds of Nicaraguans were killed and thousands were injured during anti-government protests in 2018 in what human rights advocates say has been an egregious crackdown on dissent.

In addition to instability in Latin America, the policies of U.S. President Donald Trump have made it extremely difficult for asylum seekers to find refuge in the United States, forcing many to stay in Mexico.

People who are granted



In this July 25, 2019 file photo, United States Border Patrol officers return a group of migrants back to the Mexico side of the border as Mexican immigration officials check the list, in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

asylum in the Mexico get Thursday will fortify relationcan work and eventually become citizens. But many aren't equipped to find steady work.

Gerardina González Marroquín, director of the International Labor Organization for Mexico and Cuba, said the agreement signed

permanent residency in ships between non-governthe country, meaning they mental groups that help migrants.

"We are absolutely convinced that working is the best form of social integration, that work dignifies a person, that work solves poverty, that work generates growth," González Marroquín said.

SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2020 WORLD NEWS





Rose-Marie Louis, a staff worker at the Orphanage of the Church of Bible Understanding, holds her head amid the charred children's home, including the unrecognizable body of a child marked by a yellow piece of paper, bottom right, in Kenscoff, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Friday, Feb. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

Haiti officials say 15 children died in residence fire

By EVENS SANON, MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN and BEN FOX **Associated Press**

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP)

 A fire swept through a Haitian children's home run by a Pennsylvania-based religious nonprofit group, killing 15 children, officials said Friday. Rose-Marie Louis, a child-care worker at the home, told The Associated Press that the fire began around 9 p.m. Thursday and firefighters took about 1.5 hours to arrive. The orphanage had been using candles for light due to problems with its generator and inverter, she said. About half of those who died were babies or toddlers and the others were roughly 10 or 11 years old, Louis said. Thirteen bodies were initially recovered. Justice of the Peace Raymonde Jean Antoine said two bodies were then removed Friday afternoon from the Orphanage of the Church of Bible Understanding in the Kenscoff area outside Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital. "It could have been me," said Renadin Mondeline, a 22-year-old who lived in the home with her son, now 6, for about two years until The Associated Press made close to death when we she started making enough money as a street vendor to starting renting her own place to live last year.

"These little girls inside were just like my baby."

Rescue workers arrived at the scene on motorcycles and didn't have bottled oxygen or the ambulances needed to transport the children to the hospital, said Jean-Francois Robenty, a civil protection official. "They could have been saved," he said. "We didn't have the equipment to save their lives.'

The Associated Press has reported on a long-standing series of problems at two children's homes run by the Church of Bible Understanding. The Church of Bible Understanding lost accreditation for its homes after a series of inspections beginning in November 2012. Haitian inspectors faulted the group for overcrowding, unsanitary conditions and not having enough adequately trained staff.

Members of the religious group were selling expensive vintage building fixtures like banisters and chandeliers at high-end stores in New York and Los Angeles and using a portion of the profits to fund the homes.

an unannounced visit to the group's two homes, holding a total of 120 kids, in 2013 and found bunk beds with faded and worn mattresses crowded into dirty rooms. Sour air wafted through the bathrooms and stairwells. Rooms were dark and spartan, lacking comforts or decoration.

Late Friday afternoon Haitian police raided another home run by the group and took away several dozen children in a bus, despite protests from employees.

The Church of Bible Understanding, based in Scranton, Pennsylvania, operates two homes for nearly 200 children in Haiti as part of a "Christian training program," according to its most recent nonprofit organization filing. It has operated in the country since 1977. It identifies the homes as orphanages but it is common in Haiti for impoverished parents to place children in residential care centers, where they receive lodging and widely varying education for several years but are not technically orphans.

"We take in children who are in desperate situations," the organization says in its tax filing for 2017, the most recent year available. "Many of them were very took them in." The nonprofit reported revenue of \$6.6 million and expenses of \$2.2 million for the year.



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro holds up a copy of his country's case taken to the International Criminal Court regarding U.S. sanctions during a press conference at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela, Friday, Feb. 14,

Associated Press

Venezuelan president says arrest of Juan Guaidó "will come"

By SCOTT SMITH and CHRIS-**TINE ARMARIO Associated Press**

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

 President Nicolás Maduro said Friday that Venezuelan authorities haven't detained opposition leader Juan Guaidó because the courts haven't ordered it, but he warned: "It will come."

Maduro made the remark in a meeting with the international press three days after Guaidó returned from a tour to the U.S. and Europe, in defiance of a court order prohibiting him from leaving the country.

Despite the order, migration officials let Guaidó enter when he arrived on a commercial flight at Venezuela's main international

Maduro said that the day Venezuela's justice system decides Guaidó should be imprisoned "for all the crimes he's committed," he will be jailed. Venezuela's judicial system is stacked with pro-Maduro officials who routinely issue decrees in accordance with the president's viewpoints.

"That day hasn't come yet, but it will come," the president said in response to a question from The Associated Press.

The warning comes as Guaidó tries to revive momentum in Venezuela for his flagging opposition movement. Though U.S. President Donald Trump and other world leaders expressed their continued support during Guaidó's recent trip abroad, many inside Venezuela have grown wary of the opposition as Maduro remains in the presidency and consolidates his power.

Guaidó did not respond to Maduro's threat Friday.

Dressed in a blue suit and seated before a giant portrait of South American independence hero Simón Bolívar, Maduro delivered an angry diatribe against U.S. sanctions that he likened to a "sick persecution" which he said has forced him to make difficult decisions to keep the economy afloat.

Nearly half of the population now makes purchases in U.S. dollars, according to Ecoanalitica, a Caracasbased analysis firm. The dollarization has helped fuel a limited revival of Venezuela's economy in cities like the capital, while also highliahtina disparities between those who do and do not have access to dollar bills. Maduro loosened rigid currency controls in place for 16 years last May, allowing banks to buy and sell U.S. dollars at any exchange rate, making it far easier for entrepreneurs to operate in a currency accepted internationally.

"Having to choose whether to repress or permit, I chose to permit it," he said of the growing dollarization.



LOCAL







"I just want people to know that I experienced great care in a great hospital"

ORANJESTAD — Aruba Today was visited by Mr. Ronald Ball from New York State, US recently. This lovely, repeat-visitor of Aruba wanted to share his experience of Aruba's hospital, where he was treated after not feeling well during his vacation. "I just want people to know that you have great care and a great hospital. I don't know how to write this down but my message is clear." Dr. Alex Schwengle was the doctor on duty and praised by Ball for his excellent treatment that ultimately led into a diagnosis of an illness. "Years I have gone to doctors in the States and nobody could put a name on what my issue was. But Dr. Schwengle could."

Ball feels great now, and is thankful for the care he had received. His sickness was

pital, give good attention and I experienced better service here than back at the USA."

Good attention

They have been coming here for over 25-years, and love the island. To get sick on vacation is very unfortunate and Ball is telling us his story. "I am 75 years old and recently when I came down in the third week, I was not feeling too bad but I was getting over a cold. Beginning of the fourth week, I had symptoms of a cold again. And one day I was very sick, coughing and with a temperature and all." They wanted to go to Urgent Care but they could not find it, so he ended up at the emergency room of the hospital. "Immediately they thought maybe I had the Coronavirus, although they did not tell me that.

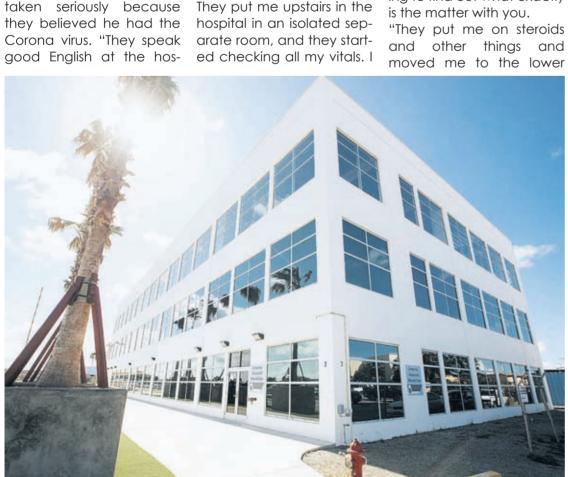
was put on oxygen and on some medication and that same evening I was put to bed there."

The next morning Dr. Schwengle came in and informed him they know he did not have the Coronavirus, but he said, we are going to find out what exactly

floor and that night he came again to visit me, and he says the medication he prescribed did not ao well. So he was changing it because they needed to get the white blood cells correct." The next day the doctor informed Ball that he was improving, but that he insisted to find out exactly what he has. Ball told him that some of these symptoms he was having for four years already and that he has been to five different doctors in the States, different lung, ear, nose, throat specialists but nobody could put a name on what his issue was.

COP diagnosed

"It is a number of things that causes it, I know that but what it was exactly nobody could tell me. I kept improving while in Aruba's hospital and the third day, Dr. Schwengle came in and he said I have COP*. He determined what this was and all these doctors in the States couldn't. I was amazed." Ball explains that it is a disease, there is nothing out there that can stop it from occurring but they can control it and help ease symptoms. "Today I feel great, I spent six days in the hospital and I had the best care. Every doctor treated me very well, as well as the nurses. I just want people to know why I am saying this, because so many times when I am talking to other people they warn me about the hospital - not to go there and avoid the place. I honestly disagree, because I had the greatest experience!"





Cryptogenic Organizing Pneumonia (COP) Cryptogenic organizing pneumonia (COP) is a rare lung condition affecting the small airways (bronchioles) and alveoli (tiny air sacs). It was previously known as idiopathic bronchiolitis obliterans with organizing pneumonia (BOOP). There's no cure for COP, but treatment can help ease symptoms, lower the chance of complications, and generally improve quality of life. Medications, supplemental oxygen therapy, and surgery are some forms of treatment





LOS ANGELES, US — Come find your place in the sun and soak up the vibes at the 20th Anniversary of the Soul Beach Music Festival hosted by Aruba unveiling the stellar lineup and superstar performers, Memorial Day weekend, May 20-25, 2020 with main stage concert headliners Mariah Carey and The Roots.

Bringing incandescent vocals embodied in glitter and glam to headline Sunday, May 24th, Mariah Carey is the best-selling female artist of all time with more than 200 million albums sold to date and 18 Billboard Hot 100 #1 singles (17 self-penned), more than any solo artist in history. Mariah is a singer/song-writer/producer recognized with multiple Grammy® Awards, numerous American Music Awards, Billboard's "Top Female Artist of All Time", Billboard's "Artist of the Decade" Award, Billboard's "Icon Award," the World Music Award for "World's Best Selling Female Artist of the Millennium," and BMI's "Icon Award" for her outstanding achievements in songwriting, to name a few – with her distinct five-octave vocal range, prolific songwriting, and producing talent, Mariah is truly the template of the modern pop performance.

Elevating the soul like no other with laced lyrics and impeccable vibrations to headline Saturday, May 23rd, The Roots have become one of the best known and most respected hip-hop acts in the business, winning four Grammys®, including "Best R&B Album" for "Wake Up!", "Best Traditional R&B Vocal Performance" for "Hang in There" (with John Legend) and "Best Group or Duo R&B Vocal Performance" for "Shine." This brings the band's Grammy®, nomination count to twelve. Additionally, "The Roots Picnic," a yearly star-studded mix of musicians, has become a celebrated institution. The Roots were named one of the greatest live bands around by Rolling Stone and serve as the official house band on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.

Deon Cole is a comedian, writer and actor who can currently be seen on ABC's Black-ish, Free-form's Grown-ish and his latest one-hour standup special for Netflix, COLE HEARTED. Deon will illuminate the main stage with rousing comedic genius and his calculating stage presence sure to captivate thousands of festival goers.

The afterglow of a paradise supernova, the 20th Anniversary of the Soul Beach Music Festival hosted by Aruba.

"We are thrilled to welcome celebrated musicians and comedians to the 20th anniversary of the Soul Beach Music Festival on One Happy Island of Aruba. Each year, this unforgettable festival creates treasured memories for visitors

Soul Beach Music Festival hosted by Aruba Goes Platinum Celebrating 20 Years of Luminous Performances

Iconic headliners Mariah Carey & The Roots and celebrity host Deon Cole on stage

as they immerse themselves in the local culture, dance the day and night away and enjoy our pristine beaches," said Ronella Tjin Asjoe-Croes, CEO of Aruba Tourism Authority.

Delve into the overflow of Aruba - One Happy Island - to ex-

perience the Caribbean Wow factor like you've never seen it before with sun swept coastal views, majestic tranquility, trailblazing scenic tours, aquatic adventures and shopping escapades along with culinary superstars ensured to alter ones state of mind. Aruba's wanderlust-fueled appeal, a true multicultural mix of modern luxury and artistic charm, draws globe-trotting travelers pad across powder soft sands while beckoning their souls to soar beyond imagination. The amplified allure of this island paradise is unmatched and offers endless attractions as in a picture-perfect postcard. Soul Beach Music Festival, previously named #4 by USA Today readers' choice "10 Best Caribbean Celebrations" and #1 "Caribbean Summer Festival" by Jetsetter Magazine, boasts a seasoned blend featuring live music performances, comedy shows and beach parties. It's no wonder festival goers return year after year to indulge in the coastal collaboration of Soul Beach Music Festivals' mega gathering and the breathtaking destination of Aruba's oceanic oasis. Coupled with the celebratory feast of Soul Beach Music Festivals entertainment and Aruba's star power, this dynamic duo offers up a lifetime supply of boundless memories. There is no other place to be Memorial Day weekend other than in the afterglow of a paradise supernova, the 20th Anniversary val hosted by Aruba.

"The Soul Beach Music Festival delivers an annual event that celebrates a reunion of family, friendships and great vibes. The event is powered by soul stirring music and hilarious comedy performances" said Soul Beach Festival Produc-





tions, CEO, Mark Adkins. "As we look forward to the 20th Anniversary, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the tens of thousands of Soul Beach tourists that have traveled to attend the event and to our true partners in Aruba, the people, sponsors, government, and Tourism Authority. This year's combination of performers is exceptional and includes one of the best live bands in the business, multi-Grammy winners The Roots, as well as one of the most extraordinary vocal Icons in history, singer/songwriter, Mariah Carey along with comedy meteorite, and this year's host of main stage concerts Deon Cole. All of this year's talented artists will further highlight the range of great performances that have graced Aruba's beautiful shores over the past two decades. We hope you'll join us for this momentous celebration and look forward to seeing vou there." said Mark Adkins, Executive Producer of

Soul Beach Festival Productions.

The 2020 Soul Beach Music Festival, #SBMF20, will roll out more highly anticipated announcements of main stage performing artists in the weeks to come. For information about ticket sales, accommodations and the latest updates sign up for CLUB SOUL BEACH, by visiting http://www.soulbeach.com.

Join the Soul Beach Music Festival community: follow us on Twitter and Instagram @Soul-BeachMusic and become a fan of the 2020 Soul Beach Music Festival on Facebook.

The 2020 Soul Beach Music Festival is sponsored by Aruba Tourism Authority; additional sponsors include Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association, Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino, Hilton, Divi Resorts, Tamarijn Aruba All Inclusive, Eagle Aruba Resort & Casino, and Courtyard by Marriott Aruba Resort.



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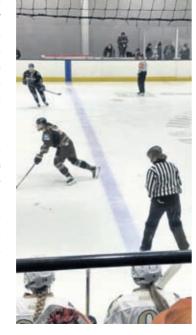
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Aruban officiates at the NWHL All-Star Game

BOSTON, US — Sarah Hickman-Harms, daughter of Aruban born Esther Ruth Harms, is a referee with international certification to referee youth, high school, college and women's professional games in the United States. Sarah's parents are Dr. Stephen Hickman and Aruban born Esther Ruth Harms. Her picture appears on the cover of the Ice Hockey Official Rules and Casebook. Last year she officiated three games of the Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL) between Calgary Inferno and Shenzhen KRS Vanke Rays in Shenzhen, China.

Last weekend Sarah officiated as linesman the 2020 National Women's Hockey League All-Star Game in the jam-packed, completely sold out, standingroom-only crowd at Warrior Ice Arena in Boston, MA. Twitch (official live streamers NWHL games) livestreamed the game





and drew over 10,000 viewers. The NWHL All Stars are selected by the teams and

In other sports, divisions of the league play against the all-stars of the other divisions.

As NWHL is made up of only five teams, the selected lemma for the fans. teams by their captains. Alternating turns, the captains choose one player every turn.

This year the teams were named after their captains: Team Dempsey and Team

This assignment process realso deviates from the 3



sults in regular team mates playing against each other in the All-Star Game, but does not take away the competitive spirit of the players. It does create a di-

players are assigned to two The fans who are loyal to a team in the regular see its players play against each other, have no affinity to any one of the teams, so there is less enthusiasm among them and much less shouting in the Arena. The NWHL All-Star game

periods of 20 minutes playing time; it splits the game in two 25-minute periods of four-on-four hockey.

For the record, Team Dempsey beat Team Packer 5 – 2 and Lovisa Selander of Team Dempsey (Boston Pride player) was selected as the MVP of the 2020 NWHL All-Star Game. Sarah is thrilled and proud to have been asked to officiate in such a prestigious game and yours truly, her grandfather Clyde R. Harms, shares her pride.



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Loyal visitors bring the whole family to Aruba

PALM BEACH — Recently, Kimberley Richardson of the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure to honor Aruba's loyal and friendly visitors as Goodwill Ambassadors and Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Goodwill Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 20 years and more consecutively. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is presented to guests who visit Aruba 35 years and more consecutively.

The honorees were couple **Stephen & Marsha Gordon** as Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba, together with couple Elliot & Susan Neser as Emerald Ambassadors of Aruba. The Emerald Ambassador certificate is the highest certificate that we present, and is given to visitors who have been visiting Aruba 35 years or more consecutively. It is incredibly beautiful to see that Aruba has so many loyal visitors, and we hope to see them for many more years to come.

These wonderful people stated that they love the island very much, especially for its year-round sunny weather, nice sandy beaches and picturesque sunsets, delicious variety of foods, its safety and Aruba's warm and friendly people who became like family to them. These honorees not only fell in-love with the island, but also brought family, grandchildren, friends, and neighbors to Aruba.

Kimberley Richardson, together with general manager of Marriot Aruba Surf Club Joop Bangma, and hotel representative Jenny Boekhoudt, presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home.





SPORTS









Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo reacts, during an NBA basketball game against Charlotte Hornets, in Paris, Friday, Jan. 24, 2020

Associated Press

Place your bet: New NBA All-Star format could attract action

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

While some basketball purists are skeptical about this year's new format for the NBA All-Star Game, the changes have curiosity brewing within the betting industry.

This year the league's annual showcase is essentially multiple games within the game, which might entice more fans to get in on the action while it's ongoing.

"I think there might be some fans who may view this as a very interesting and quite appealing introduction into the world of in-game betting, because the beauty of this format is it's a huge talking point, said Alex Donohue, a sports gambling expert for the website Bet-NJ.com.

The NBA is doubling-down, hoping the changes energize players' competitive juices.

Continued on Page 22





Canada's Graeme Fish competes in the men's 10,000 meters during the world single distances speedskating championships Friday, Feb. 14, 2020, in Kearns, Utah.

Associated Press

Fish earns speed-skating gold, world record in 10,000m

By JOHN COON **Associated Press** KEARNS, Utah (AP) —

Graeme Fish broke a world record on his way to winning his first long track speed-skating world championship.

Fish finished in 12 minutes, 33.86 seconds Friday to claim gold in the men's 10,000 meters in the opening event of the second day of the ISU World Single Distances Championships at the Utah Olympic Oval. The 22-year-old Canadian eclipsed the previous world record of 12:36.30, set by fellow Canadian Ted-Jan Bloemen in 2015.

"I really wasn't focused on getting the world record," Fish said. "I just knew I needed to do this time or that time. I just kept going with the flow. Once I got comfortable, it kind of just went well for me."

Bloemen joined Fish on the podium, taking silver with a time of 12:45.01. Germany's Patrick Beckert earned bronze in 12:47.93.

Fish took bronze in the 5,000 meters on Thursday. Both podium finishes are the first for him at a world championship event.

"This gold medal means a little bit more to me than the world record," Fish said. "It could have been done numerous times before I did it. We never really get to skate here for a 10K. It's awesome. I can't believe it."

Japan's Nao Kodaira earned gold in the women's 500 meters with a time of 36.69 seconds. Russians Angelina Golikova and Olga Fatkulina claimed the other spots on the podium. Golikova took silver, finishing in 36.74. Fatkulina earned bronze with a time of 36.78.

Kimi Goetz was the top American finisher in the women's 500. Goetz took fifth with a personal-best time of 37.18 seconds. It was her first top-five finish after a pair of ninth-place finishes in World Cup races earlier this year.

"I have been visualizing this race all season," Goetz said. "I visualize my 500 all the time and it's always on the line at world championships. I did better today than I do in my visualization, so I can't really be upset with that.'

Americans Erin Jackson and Brittany Bowe finished seventh and 13th respectively in the women's 500.

Russia's Pavel Kulizhnikov claimed gold in the men's 500 meters, finishing in 33.72. Fellow Russian Ruslan Murashov earned silver in 33.99. Japan's Tatsuya Shinhama took bronze with a time of 34.03.

Japan won women's team pursuit in 2:50.76. Netherlands and Canada finished second and third respectively to round out the podium. Team USA took sixth





Norway's Aleksander Aamodt Kilde celebrates at the finish area of an alpine ski, men's World Cup Super G, in Saalbach-Hinterglemm, Austria, Friday, Feb. 14, 2020.

Associated Press

Kilde goes top of World Cup standings with 1st win of season

GLEMM, Austria (AP) — Aleksander Aamodt Kilde got his first win of the season Friday in a men's World Cup super-G, sending the Norwegian to the top of both the discipline and overall standings.

Racing on a shortened course with run times of under a minute, Kilde finished 0.15 seconds ahead of Swiss rival Mauro Caviezel, who matched his career best result. Thomas Dressen of Germany, who won a downhill at the same venue on Thursday, was 0.31 behind in third.

"Difficult race, a long day. I am very satisfied now. First win of the season, that's fantastic," Kilde said after his fourth career win and first in 14 months. "Leading the overall and super-G World Cup is nice but the race win is more important."

The jury decided in the early morning hours to lower the start gate as snowfall and gusts were an issue in the upper part of the Schneekristall course.

However, strong winds remained in the following hours and made conditions for the racers potentially unsafe, causing several delays.

Matthias Mayer, who led the super-G standings before the race, missed a gate immediately after a jump and failed to finish. The Austrian dropped

SAALBACH-HINTER- to fourth in the standings, trailing Kilde by 72 points with three races remaining. Caviezel and Kjetil Jansrud of Norway are second and third, respectively.

> The five super-G races so far this season all had different winners. Kilde won the super-G season title once before, in 2016.

> In the overall standings, Kilde overtook Henrik Kristoffersen, who does not compete in downhill races. Kilde leads his Norwegian teammate by 79 points, with Alexis Pinturault 100 points behind in third. The Frenchman placed sixth in Friday's race.

> "Pinturault and Henrik are very consistent in the technical events so I have to step it up in the speed events," said Kilde, who finished runner-up in four races this season.

> Travis Ganong was seventh for the American's sixth top-10 result of the season. Beat Feuz, who finished runner-up in Thursday's downhill, skied out at the same spot where Mayer missed a gate.

> The races in the Austrian Alps replaced the Olympic test events scheduled for Yanqing this weekend, but moved from China following the outbreak of a virus.

> The men's World Cup is scheduled to continue in Naeba, Japan, next week with a slalom and a GS. \square



Daytona 500 up for grabs as no clear theme has emerged

By JENNA FRYER **AP Auto Racing Writer** DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP)

- The first four events leading into the Daytona 500 have produced four different winners. Ricky Stenhouse Jr. put his new team on the pole, while Erik Jones outlasted a crash-fest to win a qualifying race. Joey Logano and William Byron won the qualifying races.

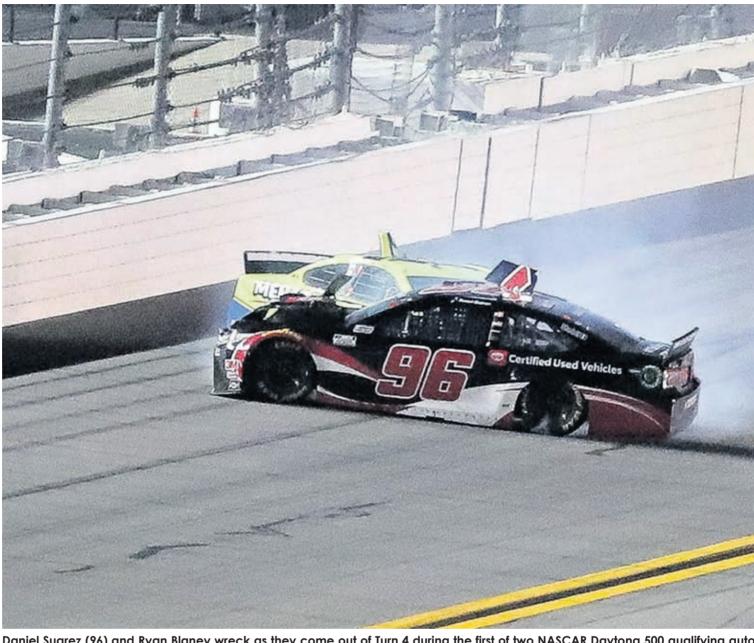
No clear favorite has emerged for "The Great American Race." No single manufacturer has a demonstrated edge going into NASCAR's version of the Super Bowl. It was a Toyota 1-2-3 sweep for Joe Gibbs Racing last year, in part because of mandated manufacturer alliances for drivers to work together, but there's so far been little indication the race will play out the same way Sunday. Instead, this is a wide-open field of 40 drivers and all believe they have a shot at the life-changing victory and the record \$23.6 million that will be divvied by among the drivers. And why not? The unpredictability of Daytona allowed Justin Haley to gamble on rain strategy last July and shock the field with a win in his third and final start of the season.

Now Haley is back at Daytona for his debut in the Daytona 500, just one of a handful of drivers in a watered-down field that includes six Cup Series rookies, a 10-year veteran who had failed to qualify for the race in his only other previous attempt and a slew of others chasing the payout that can extend the season for any fledgling team.

Timmy Hill raced his way into Sunday's field in a qualifying race and said his Daytona 500 debut will keep tiny MBM Motorsports in business for the foreseeable future. More impor- at Talladega, and in the tant? Hill thinks he's got a July race at Daytona that chance to be competitive Sunday.

"My car is very capable of running competitively in this race," Hill said. "I feel like we're not just here to participate, we're here to race."

But no one knows what that



Daniel Suarez (96) and Ryan Blaney wreck as they come out of Turn 4 during the first of two NASCAR Daytona 500 qualifying auto races at Daytona International Speedway, Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020, in Daytona Beach, Fla. **Associated Press**

racing will look like when the flag drops on the 62nd running after President Donald Trump, named the grand marshal for the race, gives the command for drivers to start their engines. The exhibition Busch Clash was a demolition derby as drivers shook off the offseason rust and adjusted to NASCAR's new rules package.

The superspeedway rules implemented last season put a taller spoiler on the cars and made for unpredictable closing rates and they were not used in the Daytona 500. Teams raced the package twice sky opened, former Daytona 500 winner Austin Dillon wrecked the favorites with an aggressive move as the leader.

The Busch Clash last week-

threw a block on reigning series champion Kyle Busch that caused a wreck that collected Logano teammate Brad Keselowski. Angry words were exchanged, cars destroyed and only six drivers were running at the end. Keselowski and Logano are downplaying any feud, but blocking is a legitimate concern for Sunday. "At the end of the day, you block because it works. It works until it doesn't," Clint Bowyer said. "That's successful until it's not, and then you're the bad guy. You've wrecked the whole field because it was an untimely block, and you wrecked everybody, but if was shortened 82 miles by you didn't, you should have rain. Moments before the and you're going to lose the race.

"So it's a tricky thing to judge. It puts you on the spot. And it's do or die, and it's a decision that has to be made that fast."

Daytona 500 winner, thinks smart racing will be critical Sunday with drivers having to ignore the way they've previously raced the speedway.

"I think survival will be more talked about this year than any year in the past," Harvick said.

"We have all been programmed to block and do things with the old package for so many years, and this is not the old package. The runs are happening faster. The cars are kind of lining up and spin out really easy to the right when you push them wrong. They are fast compared to where we were before."

Two-time and defending race winner Denny Hamlin is the William Hill betting favorite at 10-to-1 and his Toyota has indeed been good every time he's hit the track. And even after he suffered extensive damend was similar as Logano Kevin Harvick, the 2008 age in the Clash, he was

still able to push teammate Jones to the victory.

The Daytona 500 has not had a back-to-back winner since Sterling Marlin in 1994 and 1995, and he's one of only three drivers to accomplish the feat.

"It's tough, but there is more confidence," Hamlin said. "I think it's been really a great run we've had over the last eight years in particular. We've been a factor to win every Daytona 500 it seems like for the last decade. I come here thinking there's no reason that should be any different."





Kuchar leads by 2 at Riviera as Woods falls 9 shots behind

By DOUG FERGUSON **AP Golf Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Matt Kuchar made a mess of the easiest hole at Riviera. He couldn't find the fairway and felt he was on the defensive all afternoon Friday in the Genesis Invitational. He was good enough with the short irons that Kuchar still managed a 2-under 69 and built a two-shot lead over Rory McIlroy and two others going into the weekend at Riviera.

"It definitely wasn't my best stuff today," Kuchar said. "Two under was an awfully good score for the way I drove it."

Tiger Woods happily would have taken a score like that. Instead, he made his bid for a first victory at Riviera and a record 83rd title on the PGA Tour a lot tougher. Two swings with a wedge wound up costing Woods three shots, and his 73 left him nine shots behind.

"I made some pretty bad mistakes out there," Woods

He can't afford any more, not with 44 players ahead of him, including past champions like Adam Scott and Dustin Johnson, and players who would desperately like to add their name to the list of winners at this historic club.

McIlroy, in his return to No. 1 in the world, handled the par 5s and kept mistakes to a minimum in his round of 67, which puts him in the final group Saturday with Kuchar and Harold Var-



Adam Scott, of Australia, tees off on the 17th hole during the second round of the Genesis Invitational golf tournament at Riviera Country Club, Friday, Feb. 14, 2020, in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles.

Associated Press

ner III, who had a 68 in the a couple loose shots here mornina.

Kuchar was at 9-under 135. He began with a bogey on the par-5 opening hole, one of only two players in the 121-man field to not make par or better. Kuchar went long of the green, took two chips to get on the green and missed a 15foot par putt.

"You feel like you've already given up two shots on the day. Never a fun way to start," Kuchar said. "But knowing there's 17 holes to go, there's still room to figure it out."

Wyndham Clark had a 68 and joined McIlroy and Varner in the group two shots behind.

"I'm managing my game well," Mcllroy said. "I've hit

and there, but I'm thinking my way around the golf course and that's what this place is all about. You can hit a few squirrelly shots and get away with it as long as you miss it in the right places, and for the first couple days I've done that. I'm feeling pretty good about my game."

Scott has a trophy from Riviera, just not an official victory. He won in 2005 when there was so much rain the tournament was reduced to 36 holes, and he won in a playoff Monday.

He returned from a twomonth break with a 7-under 64 that left him three shots behind. Scott hasn't played since he won the Australian PGA Championship three days before Christmas.

"You're never quite sure coming off eight weeks how it's going to feel, but I was really hitting the ball out of the middle of the club," Scott said. "That gave me a bit of confidence to just kind of keep doing what I'm doing and it'll all fall into place rather than go in search for what I'm doing wrong."

Woods didn't have to search long to figure out his

He started well enough with a smart choice to hit iron on the reachable par-4 10th because of the back right pin position, a wedge into about 12 feet and a birdie. And he was never in too much trouble. The 15th hole did not appear

to present any problems, especially after Woods crushed a 335-yard drive to the middle of the fairway.

He hung his head immediately after a chunked pitching wedge that plugged into the bunker short of the green, leaving no shot to a front pin. He blasted that through the green, chipped back to 7 feet and missed putt for double bogey.

"I just hit it fat," he said. "Honestly, I was just trying to cut a little wedge in there and get it up in the air."

After two birdies on the par 5s around the turn — Nos. 17 and 1 — Woods gave away another shot with sand wedge from light rough into the front bunker on No. 3 for bogey. He bogeyed the par-3 fourth, and then he three-putted from about 50 feet up the slope on the par-3 sixth.

Johnson, who won big at Riviera three years ago, bounced back from his opening 72 with a 66 and was among those five shots behind. Brooks Koepka had a 73 and was nine shots be-

At least they're still playing. Justin Thomas opened with a 74 and never got anything going in the morning. He didn't make a birdie until his 16th hole and shot 71, missing the cut for the second time in his last three starts. Phil Mickelson, coming off a pair of third-place finishes in Saudi Arabia and Pebble Beach, shot 74 and missed the cut for the third time this year.



In this Thursday, June 20, 2019, file photo, Korea's Inbee Park walks off the 10th tee during the first round of the KPMG Women's PGA Championship golf tournament, in Chaska, Minn.

Associated Press

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) - Seven-time major champion Inbee Park moved into contention for her 20th LPGA Tour victory on Friday by taking a share of the second-round lead at the Women's Australian Open.

7-time major champion Inbee Park tied for lead Down Under

Park shot 4-under 69 to put her at 10-under 136 at Roval Adelaide, level with firstround leader Jodi Ewart mph, Ewart Shadoff joined Shadoff (70). "It was a little Park at the top of the leabit more calm this morn-derboard. Two early boout there," said Park, looking for her first win since the 2018 Bank of Hope Founders Cup. "My putting was consistent, like the last couple of days, so it was good. I just love the golf course and the atmosphere here. So, hopefully I can pull it

off on the weekend." After an afternoon of misty rain and wind gusts up to 20 woman off the pace, but she rallied with five birdies to grab a share of the 36hole lead. "It was a different day today. The wind was obviously a lot stronger, so it was a lot tougher, but I played really steady again," said Ewart Shadoff,

who has two career runnerup finishes, including at the 2017 AIG Women's British Open. "I didn't get off to the greatest of starts but I managed to fight back." ing, so it was nice to play geys dropped the English- Jillian Hollis (69), was in third place, one stroke behind. Defending champion Nelly Korda (73) was six strokes behind. Five-time champion Karrie Webb, whose lead-up to the tournament was hampered by a virus, missed the cut after a second consecutive 74.



Minnesota Wild fire coach Bruce Boudreau

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

The Minnesota Wild fired coach Bruce Boudreau on Friday with the goal of correcting some inconsistencies and making a lateseason push for a playoff spot.

First-year general manager Bill Guerin said he felt the timing was right to move on from Boudreau and replace him with interim coach Dean Evason despite the Wild having won seven of their past 11 games. Boudreau was fired in the aftermath of a shootout loss to the New York Rangers.

not one week. It's a series of things," Guerin said at a news conference in St. Paul, Minnesota.

"We have shown that we can be (one of) the best teams in the league or the so-called best teams in the league. I think in some of

the tighter game situations we could be a little bit bet-

This is the eighth coaching change in the NHL this season, and Boudreau is the sixth fired for team performance reasons. That matches the most for one season in NHL history, according to the Elias Sports

Minnesota is 27-23-7 and three points out of a playoff spot in the Western Conference with 25 games left. Guerin hopes a "new voice" from Evason helps the Wild return to the playoffs.

"This is all a matter of just winning games down the "It's not just one loss. It's stretch," Guerin said. "I expect this team to compete for a playoff spot."

> Boudreau, 65, was in his fourth season with the Wild. He had been hired by Chuck Fletcher, who has since been fired and joined Philadelphia as its GM. Boudreau took Minnesota to



Minnesota Wild head coach Bruce Boudreau watches his team play against the Colorado Avalanche during the first period of an NHL hockey game Sunday, Feb. 9, 2020, in St. Paul, Minn.

Associated Press

the playoffs in his first two seasons there.

Guerin took over last summer following the firing of one-season GM Paul Fenton. He said it was not his intent from the time he got the job to fire Boudreau.

"We had a good working relationship and we got along as people, as well," Guerin said. "I like Bruce. He's a good guy and I planned on seeing it through. I came in with an open mind and didn't have a decision made. This was just something that's been on my mind for a little while and I felt like today was the

Boudreau is in his 13th sea-

son after previously coaching the Washington Capitals and Anaheim Ducks. His team has made the playoffs in 10 of 12 full seasons, and his 567 wins rank

Evason is in his second season with the Wild after coaching the American Hockey League's Milwaukee Admirals the previous six years. He was an assistant under Boudreau for parts of five seasons in Washington.

Guerin said the front office will conduct a search for a full-time coach once this season is over. For now, it's Evason's team.

"Dean has his own thoughts and beliefs and what he believes is going to give us success," Guerin said.

"I have full confidence in him. The one thing I really do like about Dean is his passion, his fire for the game. I am hoping that that translates to the players."

Zucker's two goals help Penguins beat Canadiens 4-1

By DAN SCIFO **Associated Press**

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Newly-acquired Jason Zucker scored his first two goals with the Pittsburgh Penguins during a 4-1 win over the Montreal Canadiens on Friday night.

Zucker scored his 15th and 16th of the season in a 1:42 span, with Montreal's Brendan Gallagher getting a goal in between. Zucker provided 2-0 and 3-1 leads and has nine goals in 12 career games against the Canadiens. Kris Letang scored a power-play goal against his hometown team and his 13th overall of the season, and Zach Aston-Reese added an empty-net goal. Penguins captain Sidney Crosby had three assists. He has points in nine of 11 games since returning from core muscle surgery on Jan. 14, including a current three-game point streak. He has five goals and 17 points in his last 11 games. Tristan Jarry made 34 saves for the Penguins, who moved within three points of first-place in the Metropolitan Division. Pittsburgh has 10 wins in its last 14 games.

Gallagher scored his 20th of the season for Montreal, which lost its third straight after winning nine of 12.

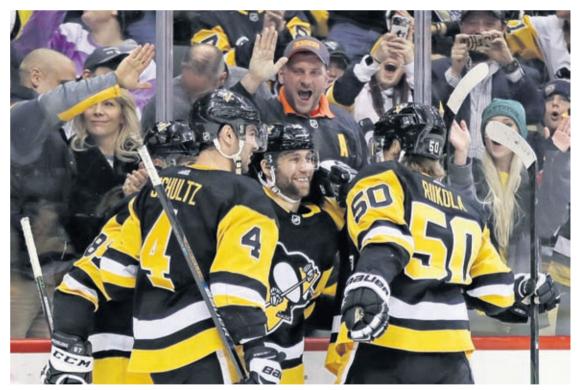
Carey Price made 24 saves for the Canadiens, who failed to score more than two goals in each of their past four games.

The Penguins acquired Zucker from the Minnesota Wild on Monday for forward Alex Galchenyuk, defensive prospect Calen Addison and a conditional 2020 first-round pick.

Pittsburgh spent the previous five weeks looking to replace All-Star forward Jake Guentzel, who is out until late April after injuring his right shoulder on Dec. 30. Zucker's arrival gives the Penguins' top-six forward group a jolt and additional scoring depth as Pittsburgh prepares for another playoff push.

Zucker made his Penguins' debut Tuesday against Tampa Bay skating on Crosby's wina. He tied for a team-best five shots but didn't score.

Pittsburgh scored the first



Pittsburgh Penguins' Jason Zucker, center, celebrates his goal during the second period of the team's NHL hockey game against the Montreal Canadiens in Pittsburgh, Friday, Feb. 14, 2020.

goal of the game on the goal at 18:00 of the second 19:06 of the second, but power play at 7:25 of the period. Crosby set it up with Zucker answered for Pittssecond period. Letang beat Price to the glove side with a wrist shot from the right faceoff dot. Letang, who continued a fourgame point streak, has 28 points in 35 career games against his hometown team. Zucker scored his first

the Penguins off the rush. He passed from below the bottom of the left circle, through two defensemen to Zucker, who one-timed a shot off Price's glove and into the net.

Gallagher scored a powerplay goal for Montreal at burgh 36 seconds later.

Zucker, with Canadiens' D Brett Kulak on his back, chipped a pass from Marcus Pettersson over Price's glove from the slot, giving Pittsburgh a 3-1 lead with 17.1 seconds left in the period.

Place your bet

Continued from Page 17

The contest is often more fun than game with players showing off their snazzy sneakers but not their best defensive stances. So the league is implementing the new format believing the change will stop the laissez faire approach to defense. Scores will be reset to 0-0 for each of the first three quarters. Each time a team wins a quarter, it earns \$100,000 for charity. The totals will then be added and the fourth quarter will be played to a target score the winning team will have to reach, rather than a standard 12-minute period. Everyone will find out Sunday if players and bettors are more engaged.

"Whenever there's a big talking point in sports and among groups of sports fans," Donohue said, "inevitably fans have an opinion and when they're legally allowed to bet it's an opportunity to express that opinion."

Donohue is based in Europe, where he says ingame betting can sometimes account for 70% to 80% of the action on a game.

In-game betting isn't as popular yet in the U.S., but he believes the NBA All-Star Game in Chicago could be a catalyst for change, saying it might be a "milestone" in sports gambling. Opinions vary on the interest in the game as a betting

event. When the league took its midseason spectacle to Las Vegas in 2007, it went under the condition that it couldn't be bet there in the sports books. Gavin Maloof, whose family then owned the Sacramento Kings and the Palms, responded: "If you bet the NBA All-Star Game, you might as well get a life."

Times have changed. There is currently gambling in 14 states and advances in technology allow bettors to put their money down on their mobile phones right from their living rooms. Bets can't be placed on Donohue's site, but it has links to regulated ones where they can.

These days, Johnny Avello, the head of race and sports book for DraftKings, said All-Star weekend, including the 3-point shooting and dunk contests, draws a fair amount of interest. About 35% of DraftKings' action is live wagering and he believes fans will jump in during the game Sunday night, particularly as they try to determine where the final total might land.

In the days before superteams, when players were foes first and friends second, the NBA didn't worry about its All-Star game. Players may have taken it easy in the first three quarters, but the competitiveness came out in the fourth. That's why Kobe Bryant laughed in 2003 when Michael Jordan made a re-



In this Feb. 18, 2018. file photo, Team Stephen center Joel Embiid, left, of the Philadelphia 76ers. leaps for the tipoff won by Team LeBron forward Anthony Davis, of the New Orleans Pelicans, during the NBA All-Star basketball game in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

quest of him before the game and did so again when recounting the story in 2015 during his final season. "I remember playing Michael his last All-Star Game in Atlanta and he and I were catching up in the locker room and he says – because this was his last game – he says to me, 'I just want you to approach this like any other game. I want you to compete against me, just like it's any other game," Bryant said. "And I remember saying, 'Michael, what the hell about me led you to think I was going to approach this any differently?'"

That mindset was lost in recent years, with the low point in 2017 when players hardly attempted to defend in a game where the West won 192-182. The league then scrapped the East vs. West format in favor of one in which two captains draft rosters. Now comes another change and bettors will have to determine if they like it.

Paul Howard, who co-hosts a radio show on the Vegas Stats & Information Network, doesn't anticipate significant action. He said bettors don't know what to expect with the changes. "Hard to anticipate what's

going to happen. It's new to bookmakers and bettors," he said. "People used to bet it over every year because of no defense. They don't know what to expect now."

That makes Avello's job tougher. Reviewing recent All-Star results won't help much in trying to set a final total, because the team leading after three quarters would end the game by scoring only 24 points a tiny number for the best players in the world — in the fourth. The teams previously combined for about 75 in the last period, he said.

Tatum, Smart lead Celtics past Clippers in double OT



By The Associated Press **BOSTON (AP)** — Jayson Tatum had 39 points and the Boston Celtics pulled away from the Los Ange-

les Clippers in the second overtime to win 141-133 on Thursday night.

Marcus Smart added 31

ward finished with 21 points and 13 rebounds. Kemba Walker added 19 points and nine rebounds. Tatum and Smart combined for 16 of Boston's 27 points in the overtime periods.

The Celtics have won seven straight at home and 118 eight of their last nine over- NEW ORLEANS (AP) all. The Clippers played most of the game without Paul George, who left in the second quarter with a left hamstring strain. Lou Williams led Los Angeles Zion Williamson scored 32 with 35 points. Kawhi Leon-

rebounds, and Montrezl scoring more than 30, but Harrell finished with 24 points and 13 rebounds. George played 15 minutes, scoring four points on 2-of-7 shooting before heading to the locker room.

THUNDER 123, PELICANS

Danilo Gallinari scored 29 points, Chris Paul had 14 points and 12 assists, and Oklahoma City beat New Orleans.

points for New Orleans, points and Gordon Hay- ard had 28 points and 11 his second straight game 3.

Gallinari's clutch shooting — he had 11 points in the fourth quarter — kept the Pelicans at bay.

New Orleans, which trailed by as many as 13 points in the third quarter, rallied behind Williamson's dominant inside play to take several slim leads inside the final six minutes.

But after Lonzo Ball's corner 3 gave the Pelicans a 111-110 lead, Gallinari hit a fall-away in the paint and followed up by rattling in a



Associated Press

Hamilton sees a 'sign of weakness' when rivals doubt him

By JEROME PUGMIRE **AP Auto Racing Writer**

Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton sees "a sign of weakness" when his rivals start doubting his ability to handle pressure.

The Mercedes driver is aiming for a seventh F1 title this season to equal Michael Schumacher's record, and is seven race wins away from equaling the F1 great's other record of 91. Last season, Hamilton won a third straight title by 87 points over teammate Valtteri Bottas, who led early before fading.

Red Bull driver Max Verstap- of six straight drivers' and pen finished third in another impressive campaign. The 22-year-old Dutchman won three races and had some close duels with Hamilton in Monaco and Hungary. Verstappen said last week he could beat Hamilton with the right car. Hamilton was asked on Friday at Silverstone — where Mercedes was testing its new W11 car — what he

made of recent comments about him.

"I find it funny seeing that. I have just always known to do my talking on the track," Hamilton said in a video from the team's garage. "I tend to see that (kind of talking) as a sign of weakness."

Two-time F1 champion Fernando Alonso previously said rivals were not exploiting Hamilton's weaknesses, but did not say what those were.

Mercedes has had the auickest and most reliable car since winning the first constructors' titles in 2014. Ferrari was quicker at times last year — but on straightline speed only. And it was the Honda engine-powered Red Bull making the biggest leap forward.

Verstappen is increasingly confident about what he could do in a car good enough to push Hamilton over a season, rather than a random race.



In this Oct. 6, 2019, file photo, Washington Redskins cornerback Josh Norman (24) tackles New England Patriots running back Sony Michel (26) during the second half of an NFL football game in

Associated Press

Redskins release CB Josh Norman, WR Paul Richardson

By STEPHEN WHYNO **AP Sports Writer**

ASHBURN, Va. (AP) — The Washington Redskins on Friday released cornerback Josh Norman with one year left on the big contract he signed in 2016, and wide receiver Paul Richardson after two disappointing, injury-plagued seasons.

Norman struggled to live up to the expectations set by the \$75 million, five-year deal he got after putting together an All-Pro season in Carolina and being released from the Panthers' franchise tag. Washington saves \$12.5 million against the salary cap in 2020 by cutting him now.

Releasing Norman a month

before free agency could pave the way to give cornerback Quinton Dunbar a raise. Dunbar has said he wanted to know where he stood with the organiza-

That standing appears more prominent in light of Norman's departure. Washington has 2017 third-round pick Fabian Moreau and impressive 2019 seventhrounder Jimmy Moreland on the roster, but Dunbar a converted receiver — is the best player at the

The Redskins benched Norman from their defense but kept him active for several games late in the season. Even former Panthers coach Ron Rivera taking over wasn't enough to keep Norman around, though the 32-year-old didn't expect that to save his job.

"You've got to put it on yourself as a person to be better within what is happening, and I wasn't," Norman said on locker clean-out day. "I can accept that." Injuries limited Richardson to 17 games over two years with Washington. After signing a \$40 million, five-year deal in 2018 with the aim of replacing the speed threat that evaporated without De-Sean Jackson, Richardson caught just 48 passes for 507 yards and four touchdowns with the Redskins.

Sakkari upsets Bencic in St. Petersburg, Kvitova withdraws

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP) matches around," - Maria Sakkari upset top- Greek player said. cause of illness.

Bencic was a set and a break up before Sakkari stormed back to win 2-6, 6-4, 6-3. "I'm really proud of the way I'm fighting and the way I can turn these

seeded Belinda Bencic That sets up a semifinal on day during a three-set win to claim a spot in the St. Saturday against Kazakh- over Alison van Uytvanck. Petersburg Ladies Trophy stan's Elena Rybakina, Bertens, who won the St. semifinals on Friday, while who beat Oceane Do- Petersburg title last year, Petra Kvitova withdrew be- din 6-7 (5), 7-5, 6-2 in their needed nearly two hours quarterfinal.

The other semifinal pits sec-7-6 (3) against qualifier Anond-seeded Kiki Bertens astasia Potapova. Bertens against Ekaterina Alexan- was 5-2 down in the secdrova, who advanced by ond set before winning five walkover after Kvitova's withdrawal. Kvitova said to force the tiebreak.

the the unspecified bothered her on Thursto win her quarterfinal 6-4, of the following six games



Maria Sakkari of Greece returns the ball to Belinda Bencic of Switzerland during the St. Petersburg Ladies Trophy-2020 tennis tournament match in St.Petersburg, Russia, Friday, Feb. 14,

Associated Press



Facebook reverses on paid influencers after Bloomberg memes



Democratic presidential candidate and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg speaks during a campaign rally at the Buffalo Soldier Museum in Houston, Thursday, Feb. 13, 2020. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner stands at right.

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and AMANDA SEITZ The Associated Press SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Facebook has decided to let political campaigns pay online influencers to spread their messages, a practice that had sidestepped many of the social network's rules governing political ads.

Friday's policy reversal highlights difficulties tech companies and regulators have in keeping up with the changing nature of paid political messages.

The change comes days after Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg exploited a loophole to run humorous messages promoting his campaign on the accounts of popular Instagram personalities followed by millions of younger people.

The Bloomberg posts weren't much more than self-deprecating humor used to sell the candidate's old guy appeal, using a tactic that until now was largely used to sell skin care products or clothing-subscription services. But the lack of oversight and clear rules around influencer marketing, not to mention their effectiveness in reaching younger audiences,

makes them ripe for misuse. Bloomberg's effort skirted many of the rules that tech companies have imposed on political ads to safeguard U.S. elections from malicious foreign and domestic interference and misinformation. Online political ads have been controversial, especially after it was revealed Russia used them in an attempt to influence the 2016 presidential election. In response, Facebook has rolled out a number of rules to prevent a repeat of that, though it has to fact-check declined political ads and refuses to ban even blatently false messages from politicians. Before the explosion of social media, it was clearer what's an ad and what isn't — and thus what's subject to disclosures and other rules. With social media, a campaign can pay celebrities and other influential users to spread a message on their behalf, without ever buying an ad and be subject to its rules.

"This is a new kind of activity that simply didn't exist when the rules for internet political communications were last updated," said Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub of the Federal Elec-

tion Commission.

Friday's policy change involves what Facebook calls "branded content" — sponsored items posted by ordinary users who are typically paid by companies or organizations. Advertisers pay the influential users directly to post about their brand.

Facebook doesn't make money directly from such posts and doesn't consider them advertising. As a result, branded content wasn't governed by Facebook's advertising policies, which require candidates and campaigns to verify their identity with a U.S. ID or mailing address and disclose how much they spent running each ad.

Until Friday, Facebook tried to deter campaigns from using such branded content by barring them from using a tool designed to help advertisers run such posts on Facebook and Instagram, which is owned by Facebook. The rule change now allows campaigns in the U.S. to use this tool, provided they've been authorized by Facebook to run political ads and disclose who paid for the sponsored posts. Campaigns that avoid using the tool, as

Associated Press

Bloomberg had, risk having their accounts suspended. "After hearing from multiple campaigns, we agree that there's a place for branded content in political discussion on our platforms," Facebook said in an exclusive statement to The Associated Press. "We're allowing U.S.-based political candidates to work with creators to run this content."

Politicians still won't be required to disclose how much they paid the influencers to run the posts. And the posts won't appear in Facebook's ad library, which publicly catalogs political ads and allows other campaigns, journalists and watchdog groups to view the type of messages politicians are pushing in the election.

Facebook's new rules won't apply to someone merely creating or sharing a post about a politician without getting paid.

Facebook said it is asking the influencer accounts that posted the Bloomberg memes to retroactively use the tool meant for such posts. After this happens, the posts will be labeled as a "paid partnership" with Bloomberg.

Google says it doesn't allow political messages using its main tools for connecting with influencers, but campaigns can make individual arrangements with You-Tube influencers. These videos would be covered under general disclosure rules, but would not be added to Google's political advertising database.

The Bloomberg campaign had taken the unconventional step of paying social media influencers — individuals with huge followings — to post Bloomberg memes using their Instagram accounts. Different versions of the sponsored posts from the Bloomberg campaign ran on more than a dozen influential Instagram accounts, each of which have millions of followers.

The Bloomberg campaign's memes showed the 78-year-old candidate, in a tongue-in-cheek awkward fashion, chatting with popular social media influencers with names like "Tank Sinatra," asking them to help him raise his profile among younger folk.

"Can you post a meme that lets everyone know I'm the cool candidate?" Bloomberg wrote in one of the exchanges posted by an Instagram account with nearly 15 million followers. The candidate then sent a photo of him wearing baggy chino shorts, an orange polo and a zip-up vest. The reply: "Ooof that will cost like a billion dollars." The billionaire candidate responded by asking where to send the money.

With the sponsored posts, Bloomberg's campaign said it was reaching those who might not be normally interested in the day-today of politics.

"You want to engage people at every platform and you want them to feel like they're not just getting a canned generic statement," campaign spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said of the campaign's strategy. The Bloomberg campaign declined to say how much it paid for the sponsored posts, or if it had more in the works.

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Trump's \$1.5B uranium bailout triggers rush of mining plans

By BRADY McCOMBS and **ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press**

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — President Donald Trump's \$1.5 billion proposal to prop up the country's nuclear fuel industry has emboldened at least one company to take steps toward boosting operations at dormant uranium mines around the West, including outside Grand Canyon National Park. The company, Canada-based Energy Fuels Inc., announced a stock sale late Thursday and said it would use the proceeds for its uranium mining operations in the U.S. West.

The Trump administration asked Congress this week for \$1.5 billion over 10 years to create a new national stockpile of U.S.-mined uranium, saying that propping up U.S. uranium production in the face of cheaper imports is a matter of vital energy security. Approval is far from certain in a highly bipartisan Congress.

Some Democratic lawmakers, and market analysts across the political spectrum, charge that the Trump administration's overall aim is really about pete in the global market, Grand Canyon. and their investors.

fuel has languished worldwide since Japan's 2011 Fukushima disaster. U.S. uranium production has plummeted 96% in the last five years, the U.S. Energy



This April 11, 2015, photo provided by EcoFlight shows the White Mesa Uranium Mill near Blanding in southeastern Utah.

Information Administration reported Thursday.

Energy Fuels Inc., a Torontobased corporation that is the leading uranium mining company in the U.S., announced it was selling stock and putting the nearly \$17 million in proceeds into its mining operations in Utah, Wyoming, Arizona, Texas and elsewhere in response to Trump's 2021 budget. Company spokesman Curtis Moore said Friday that helping a few uranium could mean opening the companies that can't com- mine 15 miles outside the

Environmentalists Demand for the nuclear Democrats have opposed uranium mining outside the national park, mainly over concerns it could contaminate water resources. Republicans say mining could bring much-needed jobs to the region.

Energy Fuels had been one of the main mining companies seeking U.S. taxpayer support for domestic uranium mining. It also helped sell the Trump administration on cutting the size of a national monument in Utah, Bears Ears, to open more land for possible future mining and oil and gas development.

Energy Fuels has no mining claims or land inside the former territory of Bears Ears, Moore said Friday. "So, that's a hard no," he said, to any suggestion it planned any immediate uranium development there.

Launching operations at the company's Canyon Mine claim outside the Grand Canyon is definitely on the table, however, if

Congress approves Trump's proposal, he said.

Associated Press

"Depending on how things go in the coming weeks and months, we may be in a position to use some of the money to put that small production," mine into Moore said.

Trump made the request for a new national uranium reserve in his 2021 budget request this week. It was the latest illustration that trying to rescue the U.S. nuclear and coal industries is a political priority for the Republican president, who often invokes national security as justification. The move has a range of critics.

"It's not the responsibility of the taxpayer to bail out an industry, whether that's uranium, solar, coal, what have you," said Katie Tubb.

a senior energy policy analyst at the conservative Washington Heritage Foundation.

The Energy Department said the plan would boost work for at least a couple of the U.S. West's nearly dormant uranium operations. Residents near another of the mines, in Utah, say they fear an increase in radioactive threats.

"Whatever Trump does, we'll be standing our ground to let the people know that we're not going to give up," said Yolanda Badback, a resident of White Mesa, a town of about 200 people who are members of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe near a uranium mill in southern Utah. Trump's plan would need approval from a highly partisan Congress. Rep. Raul Grijalva, an Arizona Democrat and chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, has opposed Trump's effort to make domestic uranium mining a strategic issue, His aides said they needed to see more details from the administration on the stockpile proposal.

Sen. John Barrasso, a Wyoming Republican and chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, backed Trump's proposal. "The United States should not be dependent on foreign imports of uranium. It is a risk to our national security," Barrasso said in a statement.

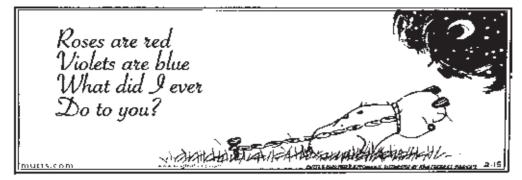
Continued on Page 27

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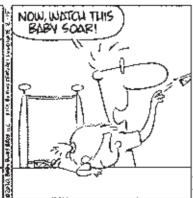


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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

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CLASSIFIED A27 SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2020

Mining plans

Continued from Page 25

Demand for nuclear and coal power sources has fallen against marketplace competition from evercheaper natural gas and renewable wind and solar. Trump has been unable to stop a string of coal and nuclear power plant closings.

The U.S. nuclear industry has sought help from the Trump administration, including asking for taxpayer subsidies to promote use of U.S. uranium. U.S. nuclear power plants in 2018 got 90% of their uranium from Canada, Kazakhstan and other foreign suppliers and only 10% from U.S. mines.

Trump in 2019 rejected a request from U.S. uranium mining operators that he set a minimum auota for domestic uranium.

But he agreed to set up a task force of national security, military and other federal officials to look for other ways to revive domestic production of the whole nuclear fuel supply chain. While Trump has called propping up U.S. uranium mining essential to national security, the Energy Department acknowledged in its budget presentation that "no immediate national security need has been identified" for the uranium

The same document contends that the funds aren't meant to "disrupt market mechanisms."

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Virus renews safety concerns about slaughtering wild animals

By SAM McNEIL and CANDICE CHOI Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China cracked down on the sale of exotic species after an outbreak of a new virus in 2002 was linked to markets selling live animals. The germ turned out to be a coronavirus that caused SARS.

The ban was later lifted, and the animals reappeared. Now another coronavirus is spreading through China, so far killing 1,380 people and sickening more than 64,000 — eight times the number sickened by SARS.

The suspected origin? The same type of market.

With more than 60 million people under lockdown in more than a dozen Chinese cities, the new outbreak is prompting calls to permanently ban the sale of wildlife, which many say is being fueled by a limited group of wealthy people who consider the animals delicacies. The spreading illness also serves as a grim reminder that how animals are handled anywhere can endanger people everywhere.

"There's a vast number of viruses in the animal world that have not spread to humans, and have the potential to do so," said Robert Webster, an expert on influenza viruses at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. SARS and the current outbreak of COVID-19 are not the only diseases in people traced back to animals. The killing and sale of what is known as bushmeat in Africa is thought to be a source for Ebola.

Bird flu likely came from chickens at a market in Hong Kong in 1997. Measles is believed to have



In this Jan. 9, 2020, file photo provided by the Anti-Poaching Special Squad, police look at items seized from store suspected of trafficking wildlife in Guangde city in central China's Anhui Province.

Associated Press

evolved from a virus that infected cattle.

Scientists have not yet determined exactly how the new coronavirus first infected people. Evidence suggests it originated in bats, which infected another animal that spread it to people at a market in the southeastern city of Wuhan. The now-shuttered Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market advertised dozens of species such as giant salamanders, baby crocodiles and raccoon dogs that were often referred to as wildlife, even when they were farmed.

Of the 33 samples from the Wuhan market that tested positive for the coronavirus, officials say 31 were from the area where wildlife booths were concentrated. Compared with long domesticated livestock like chickens and pigs, researchers say less is known about the viruses that cir-

culate in wild animals.

The Wuhan market was also like many other "wet markets" in Asia and elsewhere, where animals are tied up or stacked in cages. Activists say it's difficult to distinguish between those that were legally farmed and those that may have been illegally hunted. The animals are often killed on site to ensure freshness. The messy mix raises the tiny odds that a new virus will jump to people handling the animals and start to spread, experts say.

"You've got live animals, so there's feces everywhere. There's blood because of people chopping them up," said Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, which works to protect wildlife and public health from emerging diseases.

China's taste for wildlife is relatively new, prompted by the country's economic growth, said Peter Li, who studies Chinese politics at the University of Houston.

But with the outbreak upending lives across the country, many on Chinese social media are expressing frustration that rich people's appetite for wild animals is again endangering everyone else.

"This is the second time ...

the first is SARS, this time is Wuhan. We don't want a third time," Lai Xinping, a project cost assessor, said by phone from her home in Sichuan.

"We hate them too, and we are blamed," said Tao Yiwei, a 36-year-old homemaker. She is among those who want the temporary ban on wildlife, enacted to contain the current outbreak, to be permanent.

There are signs the Chinese government may make more lasting changes to how exotic species are raised and sold.

This month, Chinese leader Xi Jinping said the country should "resolutely outlaw and harshly crack down" on the illegal wildlife trade because of the public health risks it poses.

In the eastern province of Anhui, officials sealed farms breeding species like badgers and bamboo rats. In the port city of Tianjin, authorities say their crackdown on the sale of wildlife caught six traders, including three who were selling pythons and parrots.

All told, officials say about 1.5 million markets and online operators nationwide have been inspected since the outbreak began. About 3,700 have been shut down, and around

16,000 breeding sites have been cordoned off. It's not clear how the measures will play out over time. Before the outbreak began, it was legal in China to sell 54 species like pangolins and civets — as long as they were raised on farms.

That made it difficult to distinguish between legal and illegal wildlife in wet markets, and enforcement was lax, said Jinfeng Zhou of China Biodiversity, Conservation and Green Development Foundation, an environmental group based in Beijing.

He pointed to a widely shared image of a Wuhan market advertisement listing 72 species, including peacocks and bullfrogs, as proof that the trade is too lucrative to be stopped by anything less than a total ban on all wildlife. "The profit is huge ... like drugs," Jinfeng said.

Others disagree, arguing that banning the wildlife trade is not a realistic way to reduce risk, especially in poorer regions of the world where it can be an important food source.

They say improved monitoring, regulation or public education may better control the problem. When wildlife is farmed, for example, it allows for greater surveillance and testing for viruses, said Daszak of Eco-Health Alliance.

Even if China successfully regulates or bans it, the wildlife trade is likely to continue elsewhere. Recent visits to wet markets in the island of Sulawesi in Indonesia and in the coastal city of Doula in Cameroon revealed similar conditions to wet markets in China. Vendors were slaughtering and grilling bats, dogs, rats, crocodiles and snakes, and sanitary measures were scant.

Ongoing destruction of species' habitats will likely bring people into closer contact with animals and their viruses, said Raina Plowright, a University of Montana researcher who studies how diseases spread from wild-life to people.

"We are inevitably going to be exposed," she said.





'Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist' finds heart, song in tragedy

By LYNN ELBER Associated **Press Television Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The zestfully titled, song-anddance filled "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist" has an unlikely origin. The NBC series, about a young woman who channels other people's thoughts through pop songs, was inspired by the devastating illness of creator Austin Winsberg's father.

In the months before a rare neurological disorder claimed Richard Winsberg's life in 2011, the 68-year-old architect who had been engaged in a full, active life was left immobilized and unable to speak.

"We would try to figure out ways to communicate with him, but we didn't always know what he was thinking, what he was processing. And I was also becoming a dad for the first time, while losing my dad that I was really close to," Austin Winsberg recalled. "It was a very, very painful time in our lives."

The distance of years allowed Winsberg, 43, to address the loss in his writing. "One day I thought, 'What if the way that my dad saw the world during that time was through musical numbers?' And somehow the idea of that made me smile, and it brought a little joy out of something that

felt very sad and tragic," he

recalled.

"Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist," which previewed in January and begins its full 12-episode run at 9 p.m. EST Sunday, stars Jane Levy as Zoey, a computer coder whose life is transformed during a medical test. She becomes the one-woman audience for such impromptu numbers as work friend Max (Skylar Astin) exclaiming his unspoken affection for her with the Partridge Family tune "I Think I Love You."

choreography There's along with the vocals, invisible to all but the bewildered Zoey. But the burden turns into a gift when she gains entry to the thoughts of her dad, who is incapacitated with an illness like that of Winsberg's father.



In this Jan. 11, 2020, file photo, Mary Steenburgen, center, a cast member in the NBCUniversal series "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist," discusses the show alongside fellow cast members Jane Levy, left, and Alex Newell at the 2020 NBCUniversal Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour, in Pasadena, Calif.

Associated Press



In this Jan. 11, 2020, file photo, Mary Steenburgen, second from right in the bottom row, a cast member in the NBCUniversal series "Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist," discusses the show at the 2020 NBCUniversal Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour, in Pasadena, Calif.

Mary Steenburgen play Zoey's parents, Mitch and Maggie, with Lauren Graham as her boss.

was on Broadway in 2013-14, and sold three other music-centered TV pilots to networks that didn't make it to series. But creating what are essentially a dozen musical productions on a tight schedule proved logistically daunting, he said, even

support.

"We have eight days to shoot episodes, and we do somewhere between five Musicals are familiar turf and six musical numbers for Winsberg. He wrote the an episode," he said, all book for "First Date," which within strict creative rules. "We didn't want them to feel like music videos. We didn't want to make them feel like fantasy numbers, where the lighting and the costumes and everything change and with people singing directly at the camera."

Peter Gallaghand and with unwavering network Instead, the goal was to create "an external expression of the person's internal wants and desires," Winsberg said. "So, in a way, it's an extension of the comedy or the drama that's hap- Medicine). pening in the scene. It's not It's heartening that viewjust a musical number for a musical number's sake."

Associated Press

That high bar found the choreographer who could leap it: Mandy Moore, who shares her name with the "This Is Us" actress but is a star in her own field. Her credits include the film "La La Land," stage projects, and the Oscar. Grammy and Emmy ceremonies. She's also a double Emmy winner for her choreography on "So You Think You Can Dance" and "Dancing with the Stars."

"Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist" brought its own challenges, Moore said.

"These numbers that we're creating are unique to each character in each scene. It's not like the kind of show where you've got a cabaret club, and every time you're in the club there's a band. These dancers live in so many different worlds within the show," Moore said. "It is physically different worlds, because you do (a number) in a bedroom, or in a coffee shop. But we're also able to physicalize emotion: Something can be a very sad song, and so how does that look? What kind of shape, what kind of dance moves during a sad song, versus one that's talking about being jealous or one that is someone poking fun?"

What may be entertaining and touching for viewers remains personal for Winsberg.

"Every episode, something that happens to (Mitch) or happens to the family is something that we went through over that time. And it's raw and vulnerable, putting yourself out there like that," he said.

It's also proved rewarding. Since the preview episode aired, Winsberg has heard from dozens of people whose families are afflicted by diseases akin to progressive supranuclear palsy, which took his father's life within a relatively short time after it was finally diagnosed (the disease can be mistaken for the more common Parkinson's, according to Johns Hopkins

ers are "seeing the reflection of what they're going through," he said. It also makes his family's loss count for something.

The value of bringing awareness to the disease is "part of my dad's legacy," he said.



Edie Falco talks new show 'Tommy' and staying close to home

By BROOKE LEFFERTS **Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — In her role in the news CBS drama "Tommy," actress Edie Falco plays the first female chief of police in Los Angeles, but the native New Yorker found a way to shoot the show in her hometown.

The Emmy-award winning actress known best for her roles in "The Sopranos" and "Nurse Jackie" was drawn to the part but wanted to

work near the Manhattan home she shares with her two children, who are 11 and 15. Producers worked with her to film most of her scenes in and around New York, even if that meant driving a truck around with palm trees to insert into exterior shots.

She spoke recently to The Associated Press about how "Tommy" deals with serious issues plaguing many U.S. cities, portraying



Edie Falco is seen at Edie Falco portrait session at AP Studios on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, in New York.

(Photo by Brian Ach/Invision/AP)

complicated women, and being a self-proclaimed "homebody."

AP: This show shines a light on some serious issues in LA, including sex trafficking, immigration and wildfires. Is it important to you to do work that has a mes-

FALCO: If I'm lucky enough to be in the public eye in any way, on a television show that people are watching, it starts to really matter what I'm putting out there. You know, it's more than just entertainment at this point. It's got to be something that I share the vision of or there's gonna be a reason I want to be saying whatever it is the show might be saying to an audience. It does start to matter what I'm putting out there, and this show appealed to me in that way.

AP: This character is also mother to an adult daughter in a complicated relationship. Does having your own kids now change how you play certain roles?

FALCO: I remember when doing "Sopranos," I was very nervous that people weren't going to buy me as a mother because I wasn't sure I believed myself in the role of a mother. It just seemed so far beyond my own experience. It definitely changes everything to know what child raising really is like and how difficult and complicated it can be, especially once they start to grow into humans and they start to have their own selves. ... So here she finds herself with her grown daughter, who has a daughter of her own. And they haven't had a great relationship. And you find them as adults trying to figure out where they are.

AP: You've played this and other characters who are damaged in some way. Is that something you look

FALCO: I think there seems to be more of an appetite in audiences now to see people who are complicated, that perhaps more easily represent people that they know and love, or themselves. You know, it's very hard sometimes when you see a lot of perfect people on television, they look perfect. They act,

they wear the right clothes, they have a great apartment. And I think people are ready to see people, to hear stories that might be closer to their own. So all across media right now, I think we're representing more complicated people with complicated problems. It doesn't mean that they can't also be chief of police.

AP: Why shoot a show about LA in New York?

FALCO: I'm a bit of a homebody, first of all. And also, I have two children who are in school here in New York. Being able to go home, to your home at the end of a workday is very meaningful for me. There was a time when I loved packing a bag and going off and being immersed in that world. Those days are gone. I like my house. (laughs) I like my bed and my dogs and my kids, and that matters to me. I recharge in a very meaningful way and that makes me more ready for the next workday. So for me, it's more about being able to live at home while I work long and difficult hours. My kids come by the set and hang out after school. They're as familiar with my dressing room as they are with their own rooms at this point.

AP: You work a lot. How do you unwind?

FALCO: I have a studio in my house where I'm sort of crafty. I like to sew. I'm always like watching TV and sewing. That's kind of what I do. I fix clothing, I make clothing. I reupholster things in my house. I pick up scraps of fabric that I love that I think are beautiful and I make little things out of them. I don't know, it brings me great joy.

AP: Do you feel any pressure as the lead and carrying this show?

FALCO: If there is any added pressure, I don't feel it. I just, I love to work and I love the work I get to do, this particular type of work. I still have to pinch myself. Truly. I spent a lot of years not even daring to imagine that my life would look like this. So now I'm in it and I'm in it. I'm in it! Whole hog.



ON YOUR MOBILE DEVICE



Lizzo talks diversity, self-confidence and femininity

By BERENICE BAUTISTA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Fresh from winning three Grammys, singer Lizzo visited Mexico City for a private concert, surprising her fans with acoustic versions of her hits and a toast with tequila.

The star from Detroit, who won best pop solo performance ("Truth Hurts"), best traditional R&B performance ("Jerome"), and best urban contemporary album for "Cuz I Love You," at the January awards show sat for an interview with The Associated Press. Lizzo spoke about diversity in the music industry, selfconfidence and femininity and the disputes over the authorship of "Truth Hurts." Answers have been edited for brevity and clarity.

AP: Congratulations on your Grammys. There was a controversy about the lack of diversity at the awards this year. What would be an ideal version of the Grammys for you?

LIZZO: There's always a lack of diversity, that's the issue in general. I don't think it's like "the 2020 Grammys lack diversity," it's like the industry lacks diversity. So, the world I would like to see, of course, has an even playfield: I think there are more women, more black people, more brown people, more people from other countries where you just don't put them in a foreign category, you put them in THE category. Someone like BTS.

But I think that comes with just participation and using my privilege now as someone in the industry with a platform to just bring other people up.

AP: From the Grammys you received, any that you were not expecting?

LIZZO: I did not expect to win the first award of the night (best pop solo performance.) I thought Beyoncé was going to win, I really did. I was even going, 'Beyoncé, Beyoncé.'

But I'm so grateful and it was a very special, powerful moment. Here's to more moments like that in the future.



Recording artist Lizzo performs at the Pepsi Zero Sugar Super Bowl Party at Meridian on Island Gardens in Miami on Friday, Jan. 31, 2020, in Miami, Fla.

AP: I grew up watching pop stars that were blonde, super skinny, that looked perfect in every way. Then you come up and I'm grateful for that.

LIZZO: I'm perfect, sis! Take that back! I think that even the blonde, thin pop stars, they have imperfections, but unfortunately the media portrays them as perfect, and I think that even those women struggle with having to live up to a body type or stereotype and probably suffer from a lot of depression. I am brown, I am black, I am curvy, and I am perfect and beautiful. And I think that we, as well as other people like Billie Eilish — I am completely different from her, but she is also rebelling against the archetype of the pop star. So, I'm glad you're grateful for me, but you also need to understand that I am just as perfect as they are. So are you.

AP: Were you always this confident, or did you have to find the confidence within yourself?

LIZZO: You really have to find it within yourself, but you have to go through life

to get there. It sounds so cliché, but life is your greatest teacher and you learn the best lessons from life. I learned a lot in the last 10 years about myself, about who I am. I also learned to love that person.

AP: Your song "Lingerie" portrays a woman is a very sensual way. Do you think women should embrace and own their femininity?

LIZZO: I think women should embrace whatever it is about themselves. I think femininity is also something that can be in flux. I think a woman can also embrace her masculinity. I think a woman can embrace her androgyny, her abilities to be everything. I personally am a hyper-feminine woman.

I embrace my masculine side, but I am hyperfeminine. I have a lingerie closet in my bedroom, and I wanted to celebrate that about myself. I think that it ain't for everybody, but I do think that we should be celebrating ourselves more.

AP: There was a dispute about the authorship of your song "Truth Hurts." Has this been sorted out or is

this still going on?

LIZZO: What it's done, is done. I was so happy to give up a piece of my songwriting credit to a woman in London who tweeted 'I took a DNA test, I'm 100% that bitch,' like she tweeted it the same year that I wrote the song, and I was happy to share that with her. Even though I've never seen that tweet, I knew that she inspired one of the biggest songs of 2019.

She didn't write the song at all and the other people who claimed to write the song didn't write it either, but that's what happens when you become author of a number one hit song, everyone wants to state claim on it, but the only person who I was happy to give a piece of that success too was a black woman in London who tweeted one of the most clever things I ever heard.

AP: It's so hard to claim that something is original nowadays.

LIZZO: Oh my God, tell me about it! And for me, my ego got in the way because I've seen a lot of songs that came from the

(Photo by Scott Roth/Invision/AP)

internet or that came from a tweet or came from a meme, but that person who created it never got credit and the songwriter only gets credit. At the end of the day, there's nothing new under the sun, but it definitively taught me how to be more careful in the future.

AP: You play classical flute. Do you see yourself doing something in the future with Björk, who also likes flute?

LIZZO: I'm such a Björk fan! I would love to play flute with Björk. I think that Björk is like a Missy Elliott where it's a privilege to work with her. And she doesn't have to work with everybody or anybody, so I am waiting for that Björk phone call.

AP: Being here in Mexico, is there something that inspires you about the Latin American culture?

LIZZO: Culture inspires me, period. And I love Mexico. It's my second time here, and I always want to come. Now I'll come back for my birthday, 'cause I have been here for work now. I want to come here for play so I can really explore the culture.





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